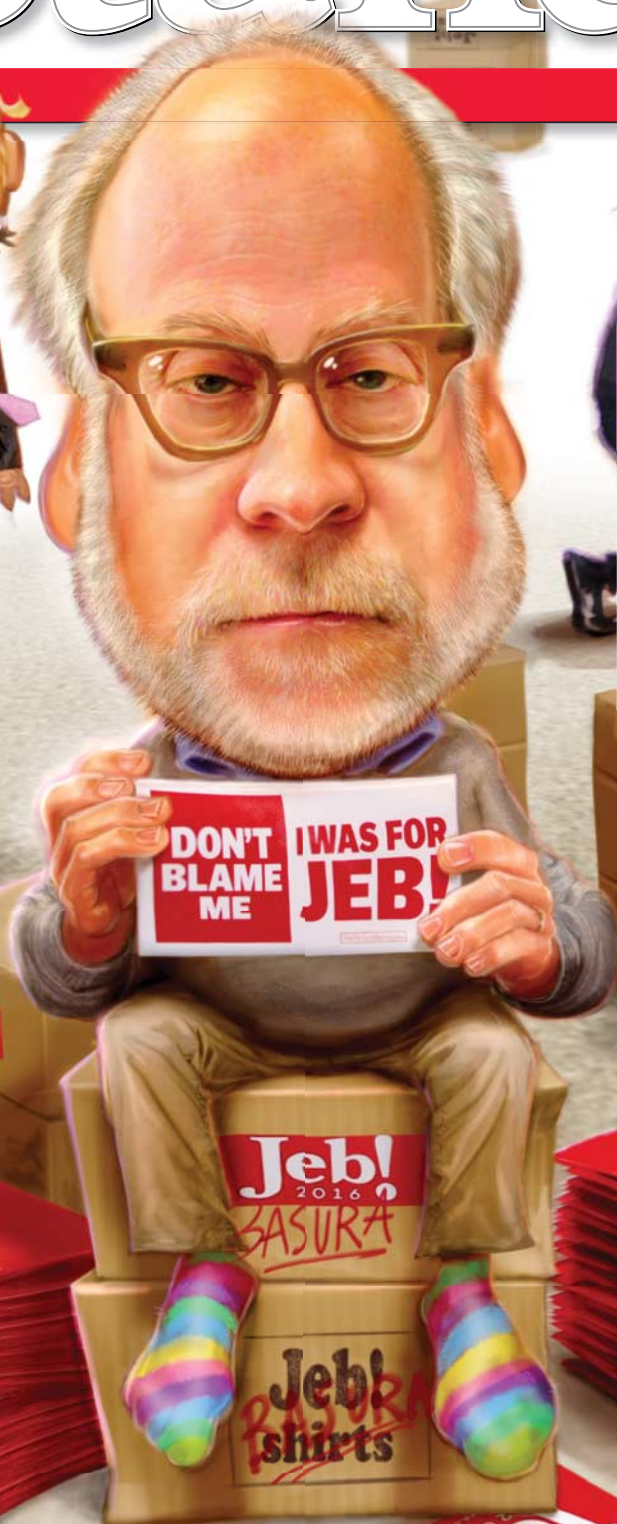


**DONALD AND
DECADENCE**
FRED BARNES • STEPHEN F. HAYES
WILLIAM KRISTOL • JONATHAN V. LAST

the weekly

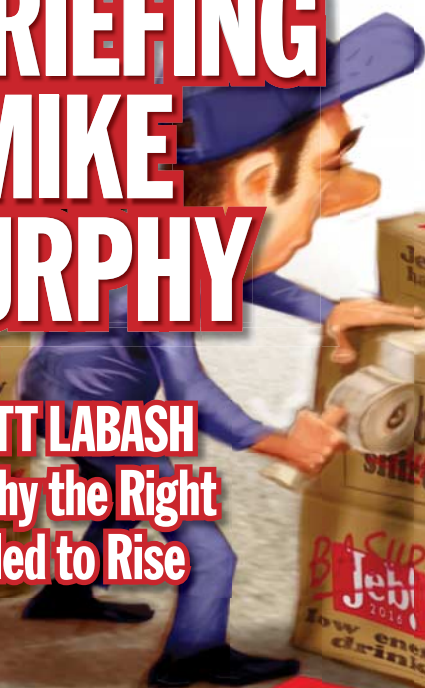
Standard

MARCH 28 / APRIL 4, 2016 • \$4.95



DEBRIEFING MIKE MURPHY

MATT LABASH
on why the Right
failed to Rise



Contents

March 28 / April 4, 2016 • Volume 21, Number 28



- 2 The Scrapbook *Hilary Putnam, the restroom wars, & more*
- 5 Casual *David Skinner, abstemious and uxorious*
- 7 Editorials *Donald and Decadence • Believing the Unbelievable*
No Consent • Five Years of Horror in Syria

Articles

- 12 Dividers, Not Uniters BY JONATHAN V. LAST
Obama begets Trump
- 13 He's a One-Man Band BY FRED BARNES
A do-it-yourself presidential campaign won't work
- 15 Petryfied BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL
Germany's Trump movement
- 18 Bro Trudeau BY KELLY JANE TORRANCE
Hot in Washington, chilly in Canada
- 20 Obamacare Again? BY ILYA SHAPIRO & JOSH BLACKMAN
A second chance for the Little Sisters
- 21 Warning Libels BY BLAKE HURST
Giving GMO foods a bad—and costly—rap

Features

- 23 Debriefing Mike Murphy BY MATT LABASH
Why the Right failed to Rise
- 33 A Park Called Zion BY GEOFFREY NORMAN
A holy desert in Utah

Books & Arts

- 38 Get Out the Word BY THOMAS S. KIDD
The biblical proportions of the American Bible Society
- 40 Society's Child BY GABRIEL SCHOENFELD
The strange, posthumous career of Capt. John Birch
- 42 Tortured Mann BY MARK FALCOFF
One shortened life reflects Germany's long nightmare
- 44 Loss Leader BY PATRICK J. WALSH
The prelude to the fall of France—in North America
- 45 Awake and Read! BY JONATHAN LEAF
Who can explain the appeal of Clifford Odets?
- 46 It's a Battlefield BY JOHN PODHORETZ
A serious comedy turns to the lure of war

- 48 Parody *Trumpstock*

COVER BY GARY LOCKE

Hilary Putnam, 1926-2016

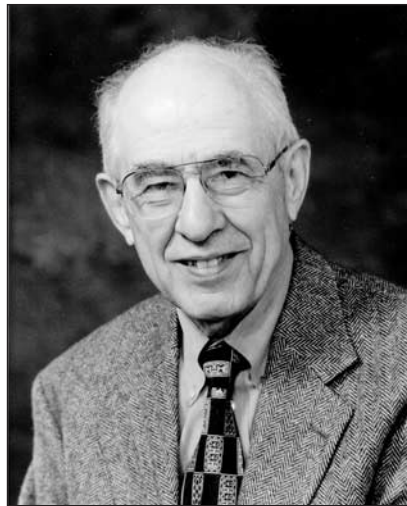
His politics usually ranged from the reprehensible to the inane, and almost always out on the far fringes of the left. His mind was an endlessly changeable place—and whatever the certainty and panache with which he announced a new intellectual position, he would dismiss it a few years later as nonsense unworthy of his intellect. He maneuvered academia with the skill of a born snake-oil salesman, and he wandered from field to field, never content to stick to a single branch of his discipline.

For all that, however, Hilary Putnam was a great American philosopher—a great American mind and a great American eccentric. With a life as full as his, lived to age 89, his death March 13 cannot be called an unexpected tragedy. But it is still a loss. In terms of pure philosophy, the abstract stuff of precise definition and abstruse question, he was the most powerful American thinker since Charles Sanders Pierce, William James, and John Dewey.

Where those earlier philosophers were all pragmatists, of one stripe or another, Putnam was trained up in the later schools of logical positivism (which, in rebellion against his teachers, he would rage against for most of his career) and Anglo-American analytic philosophy. Despite his forays into execrable Marxist politics and his few ventures into philosophical ethics, he was at heart a follower of the colder, harder branches of philosophy: a logician, a theorist

of mathematics, a language analyst, and an epistemologist.

Along the way, he developed a talent for creating thought experiments that would set the philosophical world



Hilary Putnam

afire with argument—arguments that he would often join by arguing against himself. His Brain in a Vat thought experiment, for example, seemed the freshest refutation of radical skepticism since Descartes. His Twin Earths thought experiment remains a fascinating idea about the reference of language to objects outside the mind. He was, in many ways, the last great defender of philosophical realism in academic Anglo-American thought, as the analytic traditions he knew gradually spiraled down into skepticism and social

constructivism. Even when, in the 1980s, he abandoned many of his old defenses of realism, he still argued for at least an internal realism that recognizes the being of the external world.

Attempting to rediscover in adulthood the Judaism that his parents had abandoned, Putnam brought up his children in a Jewish household—and underwent a Bar Mitzvah for himself in 1994, at age 68. In 2008, he published *Jewish Philosophy as a Guide to Life*, a reading of Rosenzweig, Buber, Levinas, and Wittgenstein. The later names in that list suggest the direction he was forced to take in the book. Putnam had an allergy to classical metaphysics, coupled with a mistrust of mysticism. One of his books, for instance, was titled *Ethics Without Ontology*, and his most famous defense of mathematics begins with the claim that we must have intellectual commitments only to entities that are indispensable for science. He could not succeed in his attempts to identify a religiously tinged ethics, a Jewish anthropology of the good life, without deep philosophical and theological commitments to God.

Even so, his philosophical musings about religion were interesting—as Putnam's philosophy was always interesting, even at its strangest and most febrile. THE SCRAPBOOK has little agreement with the many different positions Hilary Putnam took in his long philosophical career. But how can we not mourn the loss of such an extravagantly gifted American mind? ♦

Restroom Wars (cont.)

Anticipating edicts from trans-friendly bureaucrats, some states are trying to deal preemptively with the understandable discomfort felt by young women when their public school restrooms are opened to young men who “identify” as women. Tennessee legislators are working up a law that would require transgender stu-

dents to use school bathrooms consistent with the gender on their birth certificates. A similar law recently made it to the desk of South Dakota's Dennis Daugaard, but he vetoed it.

Not that the birth certificate gambit would necessarily work anyway. As Charlotte Allen noted in her cover story for this magazine a year ago (“The Transgender Triumph,” March 2, 2015), a number of jurisdic-

tions are already allowing those unhappy with the gender on their birth certificates to have the record changed.

What makes the Tennessee debate striking is the extent to which suicide has been at issue. Pass this bill, legislators were told, and troubled young people will kill themselves.

Not so far in the past there were psychiatrists who looked at the alarming rates of attempted suicide among

the transgendered as evidence that, just maybe, “gender dysphoria” is a dysfunction—a disorder—with unhappy psychological consequences. But such theories have become politically unacceptable, replaced with a trendy new victimology: The transgendered aren’t accepted, either by their families or society; they are bullied; they are ridiculed; and it is that abuse which leads to depression and ultimately violence to self.

The suicide question, far from being a psychological red flag, has become an all-purpose rebuke to anyone who isn’t racing to keep up with the LGBT vanguard. Henry Seaton, a high school student who claims to be transgendered, testified before a Tennessee house education subcommittee about the difficulty and stress of using school bathrooms when one doesn’t fit neatly into the old-fashioned male/female categories. (The teachers’ restroom has been made available to accommodate Seaton, but the student is unhappy about that segregation.) Pointing to the attempted-suicide rates of LGBT youth, Seaton said, “When you don’t have a restroom to use, that really encourages those numbers to increase exponentially.” The same argument was made by Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network executive director Scott Ridgway, who told lawmakers the bathroom bill “can actually contribute to suicides or suicide attempts among our transgender youth in Tennessee.”

Psychiatrists are often vexed by patients who use “the threat of suicide to manipulate the hospital system,” according to Seymour Halleck in *Law in the Practice of Psychiatry: A Handbook for Clinicians*. “Even worse, patients who begin to use suicidal threats and gestures for manipulative purposes may generalize these behaviors to gain control of many types of social situations.” Such as to control a political debate, perhaps? ♦

Bully Business

With progressive education’s long march to undo America’s consensus on Judeo-Christian values near-

ly complete, kids trapped in public schools are routinely exposed to only two forms of moral exhortation: being scolded over global warming and subjected to a torrent of anti-bullying messages. Concern for the environment and kindness to others aren’t necessarily bad messages for kids to hear, but when hitched to a narrow political agenda and taught outside a broader moral framework, these messages can become pernicious.

We saw a good example of this last week in New Jersey, where the Board of Education of the Township of Montgomery found a sixth-grader guilty of “harassment, intimidation, or bullying.” The sixth-grader’s crime

was telling a vegetarian classmate that “it’s not good to not eat meat” and that “he should eat meat because he’d be smarter and have bigger brains.” He also told the classmate “vegetarians are idiots.”

THE SCRAPBOOK would find this child guilty of being a sixth-grader. An administrative judge, on the other hand, found the kid guilty of bullying. New Jersey law, as ridiculous as it is, is pretty clear on this point:

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being



The team from EAST WIND in 2 great books!



EAST WIND - Lara and Uri's first international chase begins as terrorists threaten to blow up U.S. cities.

DEVIL AMONG US - When a New York synagogue is destroyed, the FBI and Mossad are enlisted to smash an anti-Zionist plot in the U.S.

"An all-too plausible and scary scenario..."

-- Lee Bender, Phila. Jewish Voice



"Winnick's fine thriller displays his expert knowledge of the Middle East and his laudable skill as a storyteller."

-- Kirkus Reviews

**Now available at
Amazon.com
Kindle.com
and BN.com**

www.JackWinnick.com

motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property.

Of course, when the law codifies bullying as judging "any other distinguishing characteristic," there's no end to the absurdities that might result. Tellingly, the judge didn't punish the kid for being mean. His decision found the kid guilty for pointing out his vegetarian classmate was different and disapproving of the classmate's dietary choices. As noted by *Washington Post* legal blogger Eugene Volokh, "The decision didn't single out the nonsubstantive insult—'vegetarians are idiots'—as being the punishable statement. Instead, the decision treated this statement as on par with polite factual and normative claims (whether accurate or not), such as 'it's not good to not eat meat' and '[you] should eat meat because [you]'d be smarter and have bigger brains.'" The kid's mistake, in the eyes of the law, was homing in on "a distinguishing characteristic."

As miscarriages of justice go, the carnivore child will probably survive his sentence of five lunchtime detentions. But this is a pretty harrowing lesson in what public schools have become. Instead of being chided by a teacher or principal for a lapse in manners, the boy was dragged before a judge whose ruling will send all the wrong messages for a middle school student trying to decipher the right social norms. The ultimate lesson for the child is he has two options: Either he can remain cowed, or he can go ahead and disregard the admonition to politely disagree with someone because he's not allowed to have an opinion anyway.

But there's a lesson for the rest of us here, as well. If we want to know why our civic disputes have become so bitter, the answer is that for a long time now, our schools haven't taught Americans how to be civil. ♦

the weekly Standard

www.weeklystandard.com

William Kristol, *Editor*
Fred Barnes, Terry Eastland, *Executive Editors*
Richard Starr, *Deputy Editor*
Eric Felten, *Managing Editor*
Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson,
Victorino Matus, Lee Smith, *Senior Editors*
Philip Terzian, *Literary Editor*
Kelly Jane Torrance, *Deputy Managing Editor*
Stephen F. Hayes, Mark Hemingway,
Matt Labash, Jonathan V. Last,
John McCormack, *Senior Writers*
Jay Cost, Michael Warren, *Staff Writers*
Daniel Halper, *Online Editor*
Ethan Epstein, *Associate Editor*
Chris Deaton, Jim Swift, *Deputy Online Editors*
David Bahr, *Assistant Literary Editor*
Priscilla M. Jensen, *Assistant Editor*
Erin Mundahl, *Editorial Assistant*
Shoshana Weissmann, *Web Producer*
Philip Chalk, *Design Director*
Barbara Kyttle, *Design Assistant*
Teri Perry, *Executive Assistant*
Claudia Anderson, Max Boot, Joseph Bottom,
Tucker Carlson, Matthew Continetti,
Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein,
David Frum, David Gelernter,
Reuel Marc Gerecht, Michael Goldfarb,
Mary Katharine Ham, Brit Hume,
Frederick W. Kagan, Charles Krauthammer,
Yuval Levin, Tod Lindberg,
Robert Messenger, P.J. O'Rourke,
John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer,
Contributing Editors

MediaDC

Ryan McKibben, *Chairman*
Stephen R. Sparks, *President & Chief Operating Officer*
Kathy Schaffhauser, *Chief Financial Officer*
David Lindsey, *Chief Digital Officer*
Catherine Lowe, *Integrated Marketing Director*
Mark Walters, *Chief Revenue Officer*
Nicholas H.B. Swezey, *Vice President, Advertising*
T. Barry Davis, *Senior Director, Advertising*
Jason Roberts, *Digital Director, Advertising*
Rich Counts, *National Account Director*
Andrew Kaumeier, *Advertising Operations Manager*
Brooke McIngvale, *Manager, Marketing Services*
Advertising inquiries: 202-293-4900
Subscriptions: 1-800-274-7293

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in March, fourth week in June, and third week in August) at 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington D.C. 20005. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-274-7293. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, \$4.95. Back issues, \$4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20005. Copyright 2016, Clarity Media Group. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of Clarity Media Group.



Got To Give It Up

It was my birthday, and I didn't have a drink to celebrate. A few nights later I made a dinner of pork tenderloin with mushrooms and olives. The only thing missing was a glass of red wine, yet I stuck with water.

Alcohol is just one of several things I have given up recently. The others are carbs, sugar, dairy, processed foods, pleasure, joy, dessert, happiness, and... I must be leaving something out, the list is so long.

It's not exactly true that I am doing this for Lent. Although the season of sacrifice has been an inspiration, what really brought this on was the overindulgence of winter, that amazing, gastro-nomic, hypersocial stretch of the waistband from the bounty of Thanksgiving through the party-hopping of December, onward to the feasts of Christmas, and coming to a rest with fat-chance resolutions in early January. Or not. In our neighborhood, holiday sequels erupt whenever the schools close for snow, as friends gather around backyard firepits with coolers full of craft beers and folding tables weighed down by plates of cheese, pots of chili, cupcakes, cookies, and many other things I've stopped eating.

But only for now, or thirty days to be exact. I am on a Paleo diet of puritanical extremity called the Whole Thirty. Its creators, Melissa and Dallas Hartwig, are cited in my house like church authorities in a theological debate. Is it okay to have honey in your tea though you've given up sugar? Not in this Paleo diet, which takes a dim view of substituting the permissible for the forbidden. The point is not simply to avoid certain foods, but to reestablish your eating habits on a healthier basis.

There are other diets even more

strenuous, where the penitents cut out carrots, pears, and other vegetables and fruits that contain more than the prescribed amount of naturally occurring sugar. And, sure, no one can beat a longtime vegan when it comes to sacrificial purity. Still, I feel like I have earned my right to a clean conscience, despite the guilt I feel after sneaking a few droplets of honey in my tea.

But cheating at all, I am told by my wife Cynthia, the local keeper of doctrine, undermines the whole diet. Apparently, I should start over, this according to the Hartwigs. Too bad, I say. I am not starting over.



As a matter of fact, I wasn't really paying much attention to the extra pounds of winter. Biking to work and playing a couple of sports, I get plenty of exercise. When my clothes feel a little snug, I skip dessert and cut out alcohol for a few days, then, *voilà*, I am back to fighting weight.

My Lenten sacrifice was going to be lame, as usual, giving up drinking during the week and trying to be less quick to anger when I find my children playing on the roof or drawing on the furniture with Sharpies. Then Cynthia said she wanted to do this Paleo thing.

It sounded difficult. Immediately I pictured myself ruining her chances by coming home in the evening with a long baguette, a hunk of cheese, and a growler of our favorite IPA, and saying

something stupid like, "What's wrong, babe? You seem upset. How about pasta for dinner? I'm gonna make that cream sauce you like so much."

So, to avoid becoming an obstacle, I decided to join in. It fits with my sense of what keeps a marriage going in the hard spots: a will to submit, to surrender, to give up, as in giving up being right. Giving up being indifferent to issues that your spouse is passionate about. Giving up the possibility of giving up, because people are depending on you to earn a living, to come home, to be around, to be the person you are. A couple years after I got married, I gave up smoking, and ever since I have been giving up one thing after another.

There's a 70 times 7 logic to marriage. How many times should I try

to put my wife's feelings first? The answer is not 490. To me, the answer is something like, as many times as you possibly can.

When you think you've been humble enough, when you think you've been on your knees all day long and deserve to stand up, that's when you have to remember that your spouse has to put up with you all the time. The least you can do is let this one thing go. And the next. And, if you can, the one after that.

For that reason, I gave up alcohol, for which I have an old fondness, and carbs (likewise) and processed foods and so on. Because living with me is no piece of cake.

DAVID SKINNER

Donald and Decadence

John Feehery is a Washington lobbyist and former spokesman for the disgraced ex-speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert. Last week, Feehery explained to the *Atlantic's* Molly Ball why he's reconciled to accepting Donald Trump as the nominee of his party:

"If it weren't for all the idiotic and racist comments, he would be kind of a breath of fresh air," Feehery said. "He's someone who wants to get stuff done—a politician who's not beholden to any kind of ideology, not beholden to special interests. I don't think he is George Wallace in his heart of hearts. He's not a strategic threat to the future of the republic. He's just a buffoon and a political opportunist."

Idiotic and racist comments, a buffoon and opportunist—those are the words of a Trump supporter. But not to worry. Trump is not "a strategic threat to the future of the republic."

Needless to say, there's no reason to believe most D.C. lobbyists would recognize such a threat if it strolled into their well-appointed offices and plopped itself down on one of their well-upholstered settees. In this respect, the Republican establishment is like most establishments. They were built once upon a time by hardy and capable souls. But the successors have gone soft, and now the establishment is staffed by more pliable types, living off the political capital of their forebears, with a deeply ingrained instinct to accommodate those who threaten from without and to collaborate with the buffoons and opportunists who have established beachheads within.

Donald Trump has established such a beachhead, an impressive and even intimidating one. Donald Trump has exposed the decadence of a Republican party that many of us had thought, or at least hoped, was renewing and reinvigorating itself. Donald Trump has brought to light the rot of an ideological movement that many of us had thought was alive and reasonably well. Donald Trump has revealed, to some degree, the degradation of a public for whom many of us had higher hopes and expectations.

Trump is a master at sensing and exploiting decay. His showmanship impresses, his bullying intimidates, his bravado seems bracing. But while decadence may explain a demagogue's success, it is no excuse for yielding.

We at THE WEEKLY STANDARD are certainly not immune to its appeal. But at key moments, the votaries of freedom must be able to resist the temptations of decadence. They must gather their forces and fight.

For now, that means fighting to deny a "buffoon and

opportunist" who makes "idiotic and racist" comments the nomination of the Republican party. Trump has so far won about 38 percent of the votes cast in Republican primaries and caucuses, winning 47.5 percent of the delegates chosen thus far. He's clearly in the lead. He's the likely nominee. But bowing to the likely as if it were inevitable is surely a marker of decadence. The thing to do instead is to contest the more than 20 states and territories yet to cast their ballots, and to rally behind Ted Cruz—an intelligent constitutional conservative who would have a steady hand as commander in chief—as the remaining viable alternative.

If it comes to it, there is also a Track Two, and serious people are preparing for that as well, as they should. That preparation involves finding a respectable and respected figure who might run as an Independent Republican and helping him or her get on the ballot in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Such a candidate would follow in the footsteps of Joseph Lieberman in Connecticut in 2006 and Lisa Murkowski in Alaska in 2010, both of whom ran as independents, won, and then rejoined the parties from which they had spent a few months apart.

We believe there are persuasive answers to the arguments against such an independent effort. Those arguments range from earnest concern that such an effort would simply be futile (it would be difficult but not impossible), to worry that it would simply help Hillary Clinton (what would most help Hillary Clinton is Donald Trump as the GOP nominee), to the suggestion that it would hurt the Republican party (to the contrary, it would help both down-ballot in this election and for the future).

But we are not at this juncture yet. With 40 percent of the delegates yet to be selected, there is time to save the Republican party from within. Only if that effort fails would extraordinary measures be required.

The Republican party has its flaws and the conservative movement its limitations. The nation could go on without them. It went on before them. But it's not as if the moment calls for extraordinary sacrifices in this battle to save a decent party and a worthwhile movement. It requires no great courage to stand up to the accusation from faux populists that we are being insufficiently attentive to the alleged will of the people and from faux realists that we are stubbornly refusing to adapt to the apparent mood of the day. We cheerfully reject their admonitions. We wear their scorn as a badge of honor.

—William Kristol

Believing the Unbelievable

Here's the new line from Donald Trump's cheerleaders in the conservative media: A refusal to support Trump is a de facto endorsement of Hillary Clinton. It's an argument they're making out of necessity, not conviction, trying to use peer pressure to achieve the unanimity their previous exhortations failed to produce.

First, they asked us to believe Trump was a conservative. But that argument couldn't survive a cursory look at his background, and it falls apart further with nearly every policy pronouncement Trump makes. Then they said he was antiestablishment. But Trump financed the establishment of both parties for years and is now telling anyone who will listen that he intends to go establishment once he gets the Republican nomination. Then they asked us to look past his boorishness and promised he'd tone it down as the process went on. But Trump continued his subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) race-baiting and lately has encouraged violence against those who protest at his rallies. And when his supporters answered his call, he defended their actions and once again raised the possibility that he'd pay the legal fees of offenders. They promised he'd surround himself with the very best people. But Trump's campaign manager manhandled a female reporter, and when Trump was asked last week to make good on his promise to name his foreign policy advisers, he said: "I'm speaking with myself, number one, because I have a very good brain and I've said a lot of things. . . . My primary consultant is myself, and I have a good instinct for this stuff."

Trump is manifestly unqualified for the office he seeks. And despite the best efforts of Trump boosters to persuade people otherwise, many Republican primary voters remain unconvinced.

In the five contests held on March 15, the share of GOP primary voters who told pollsters flatly they would not support Trump if he becomes the nominee ranged from roughly a quarter to a third. When GOP voters were asked if they'd be "satisfied" with a Clinton vs. Trump matchup or if they'd look at supporting a third-party candidate, the numbers were staggering. In Missouri and Illinois, 43 percent of GOP primary voters said they'd "seriously consider voting for a third-party candidate." In Ohio, 42 percent said they were potential third-party voters. In North Carolina it was 39 percent, and in Florida, Trump's best state

that day, 3 in 10 Republican primary voters said they'd seriously consider a third party.

As those numbers indicate, a large swath of the Republican primary electorate is either so stubbornly opposed to Trump that they will not vote for him or dissatisfied enough that they will consider alternatives outside of their party. Those percentages may diminish, but given the intensity of views about Trump, they may not come down that far. So much for the myth, eagerly propagated by Trump enthusiasts, that the battle for the GOP nomination is a fight between Donald Trump and the protectors of the "establishment" in Washington.

Having failed to ease concerns about Trump's character and convictions, his advocates are now making a different case: Trump will crush Hillary Clinton in a general election. It's a revealing tack—answering objections about temperament and philosophy with claims about electability. It's also highly dubious.

Former House speaker Newt Gingrich says that with support from the "Republican establishment," Trump could turn his effort "into a Reagan campaign like 1980 and have the party win a stunning victory."

Stunning is one word for it. Ronald Reagan won 10 times the electoral votes of Jimmy Carter—489–49—in 1980, winning 55 percent of the votes cast for the two major-party candidates. Reagan won all but six states. The map of the 1980 election is almost entirely red, with a few spots of blue.

It was a landslide. Donald Trump matching that feat is, well, improbable.

Hillary Clinton has beaten Donald Trump in 43 of the past 49 head-to-head national polls. Sixty-seven percent of American voters have a negative view of Trump, according to a *Washington Post*/ABC News poll out last week, and 56 percent say their view is "strongly" unfavorable. His favorable rating is at 30 percent, giving him a net favorable rating of negative 37. That's not only the lowest rating of any candidate in the 2016 race, it's among the lowest ratings seen in modern history.

Clinton has abysmal honest/trustworthy ratings; Trump's are lower—in some cases nearly twice as bad as Clinton's. In head-to-head comparisons with Trump, she's seen as a candidate who is more empathetic and relatable and who has the right experience for the job. And, importantly, the more voters have seen of him, the worse he's looked. His numbers in all of those categories have declined since September, in some cases markedly.

A separate *Washington Post* poll released in late January found that nearly 7 in 10 Americans say that the idea of a Trump presidency gives them "anxiety." For Clinton, it's 5 in 10. (Fifty-one percent say they're "very" anxious about Trump; 35 percent say the same of Clinton.)

Trump regularly claims he'll do well with Hispanic voters, the nation's fastest-growing voter bloc. But a *Washington Post*/Univision poll from February found that 8 in 10 Hispanic voters have an unfavorable opinion of Trump, with

7 in 10 having a very unfavorable view of him. In a head-to-head among Hispanic voters, Clinton beats Trump 73-16—some 13 points worse than Mitt Romney fared in 2012.

In 2012, Romney won 59 percent of the white vote and lost by five million votes. Trump is now polling below Romney's anemic 27 percent performance among Hispanics and below Romney's 17 percent among all nonwhites. That means Trump would have to win almost 70 percent among whites to gain a popular majority in a likely 2016 electorate. That's better than any Republican has ever performed in the history of exit polling.

Importantly, Trump's unpopularity isn't new. Although he's grown less acceptable to general election voters even as he's become better known, he never looked like a strong general election candidate.

Is it possible for Trump to win a general election against Hillary Clinton? Sure. She's an awful candidate who is under FBI investigation and stands a reasonable chance of being indicted or having one or more of her top aides charged with serious crimes. Trump enthusiasts rightly point out that his polling at the beginning of the GOP nominating process was also pretty grim. If Trump were to prevail, it would be one of the most dramatic reversals of electability prospects in recent memory. The closing argument from Trump enthusiasts isn't much of an argument at all. It's a wish.

In short, the same people who have asked us to overlook his cronyism, his liberalism, and his chauvinism now want us to disbelieve all the data on Trump's electability, and some of them would have us believe he wouldn't just win but would triumph in a landslide.

When that doesn't happen—and when Trump either loses or proves a disastrous president—they'll go looking for someone to blame.

They won't have to look far.

—Stephen F. Hayes

No Consent

Last week President Barack Obama nominated federal appellate judge Merrick Garland to fill the vacancy created by Justice Antonin Scalia's untimely death in February. Under the appointments clause of the Constitution, Garland won't take a seat on the Supreme Court unless the Senate approves his appointment. Which isn't likely: Soon after Scalia's death, Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell announced that Senate Republicans would block the appointment of an Obama nominee, regardless of who the person might be, until after the November elections.

Of course, Obama wants Garland confirmed, and now. But Obama has no constitutional authority to force the

Senate to commence a confirmation process that normally includes hearings and a vote in committee, debate on the floor, and—if the nomination makes it that far—culminates in a vote consenting to or rejecting the appointment of the nominee. A president has the power to nominate anyone he wants to be a justice. Yet for a president actually to *appoint* his nominee, he must have “the advice and consent of the Senate.”



Introducing Merrick Garland

The Constitution doesn't define those words but leaves the task to the Senate. And what this Senate decided is that there will be no consent given, and therefore no confirmation process begun. Nothing will happen with the Garland nomination in the Senate—at least for now.

In Garland, who is 63, President Obama has picked a judge with excellent credentials and a good reputation. A graduate of Harvard Law School, he was in private practice during the 1980s before becoming a prosecutor for the U.S. attorney's office in Washington, D.C. During the Clinton administration he joined the Justice Department, where he supervised the prosecution of crimes of domestic terrorism, including those by the Unabomber and Timothy McVeigh.

In 1997 President Clinton put Garland on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. He has compiled a record that Obama is trying to sell as that of a judicial moderate. In reality, it is more the record of a liberal. He has participated in a number of Second Amendment cases and demonstrated he would likely be a reliable vote against the right to keep and bear arms. He has also consistently deferred to decisions by federal regulatory agencies and would seem highly unlikely to rethink separation of powers issues raised by the modern administrative state. Garland has not had occasion to opine on many of the questions that have sharply divided the Court—including those involving same-sex marriage, abortion, and voting rights. But there is no reason to think he would break from the Court's liberals in those areas.

Right now the Court includes four judicial liberals and three judicial conservatives; and then there is Justice

Anthony Kennedy, who votes with the conservatives but often joins the liberals on social issues, such as same-sex marriage. Garland is not the most liberal nominee Obama could have selected, yet with his addition the Court would move undeniably to the left—indeed, would become an unambiguously liberal court. Garland would be the fifth vote, and sometimes the sixth, on that Court.

Is that the kind of Supreme Court the country wants? This is the question Senate Republicans want voters to consider this November. That is why they have taken their no-consent position, rendering pointless a confirmation process.

Their position is principled but hardly without risk. A Democrat could win the presidency, and Republicans could lose their Senate majority (with either eventuality likely to

be for reasons unrelated to the philosophical direction of the Court). If the GOP takes a drubbing in November, some Republicans might be disposed to confirm Garland in a lame-duck session. As Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) told the *Wall Street Journal*, “For those of us who are concerned about the direction of the court and wanting at least a more centrist figure—between him and somebody that President Clinton might nominate, I think the choice is clear.”

The best scenario is the much different one in which the presidential candidate with the best understanding of the law and the courts—Republican Ted Cruz—wins the White House, Republicans retain the Senate, and a Scalia-like judge is nominated. And, “with the advice and consent of the Senate,” is confirmed.

—Terry Eastland

Five Years of Horror in Syria

Last week marked the fifth anniversary of what started as a peaceful uprising in Syria. A bunch of teenagers scrawled on a wall in their hometown of Deraa the slogan of the Arab spring: “The people,” they wrote, “want to topple the regime.”

Syrian security forces caught the boys and tortured them. When news of the regime’s crime spread, thousands around the country filled the streets of their cities, towns, and villages to make their voices heard. Their protests were peaceful, but the response of Bashar al-Assad’s troops was not. They slaughtered unarmed demonstrators and tortured others in jail. Eventually, the people picked up arms to defend themselves.

Those whom President Obama later deprecated as “former doctors, farmers, pharmacists, and so forth” with no chance against “a well-armed state backed by Russia, backed by Iran, a battle-hardened Hezbollah,” nonetheless fought back. The leader of the free world disdained to help them because he had his eyes on a nuclear deal with Iran, and the clerical regime in Tehran was helping its Syrian ally Assad to crush the opposition like insects. If he helped the farmers and pharmacists to defend themselves and their families, Obama reasoned, it would damage his chances of doing a deal with the cruel regime that was Assad’s partner in slaughter.

Because the White House saw no strategic logic to arming the opposition, or setting up a no-fly zone or a buffer zone to protect them, malign forces filled the vacuum. First there was the Islamic State and later Russia, and the death toll mounted. Five years and hundreds of thousands of deaths into what has become the most devastating conflict of the 21st century, the war shows no sign of ending.

Five years later, it’s still difficult to see the magnitude of it clearly. And some of the key figures are either confused or obfuscating.

Last week, Vladimir Putin announced his intention to draw down Russian forces in Syria. Nonetheless, the U.S. military says it has not seen a significant reduction in Russia’s “combat power.” A few Russian airplanes left, a few more helicopters arrived. In other words, nothing has really changed on the ground.

In Washington, Israeli defense minister Moshe Ya’alon warned that a Syria dominated by Iran was unacceptable. He proposed a federalized country with sectarian cantons, including an “Alawistan” for the minority Alawis who control the regime in Damascus. Surely Ya’alon is aware that the formation of such a canton is already under way, and its main purpose is to ensure what most concerns Ya’alon—Iranian hegemony in Syria.

Perhaps the most significant development last week



was the State Department's decision to label the Islamic State's actions a genocide against Middle East minorities. Nowhere in John Kerry's statement listing ISIS's gruesome crimes against Christians, Yazidis, Shiites, and others is there any mention of Bashar al-Assad. The Syrian despot and his allied forces, including Iran, Hezbollah, assorted Shiite militias from around the region, and Russia, are responsible for the vast majority of deaths in the conflict, most of them targeting the country's Sunni Arab population. To obscure the Syrian butcher's bloody role is to participate in a cover-up of war crimes on a massive scale.

It is not difficult to see why the Obama administration chooses to divert attention away from Assad's gory campaign—the president wanted a nuclear deal with Iran, and to get it he had to play nice with the clerical regime, which includes, as Obama explained, respecting Iran's "equities" in Syria.

Five years on and the Syria conflict has become a three-headed monster—a genocide, an increasingly large multi-power war involving states and nonstate actors, and a refugee crisis. The world has seen nothing like it since the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. What makes the Syria conflict even more dire, even more consequential is that it affects two major regions of the world, the Middle East and Europe. Indeed, according to some European officials, the Syrian refugee crisis is an existential threat to the EU.

The Syrian war is no longer a conflict that touches only Middle Eastern states, sects, and tribes. It is a global crisis—one attracting powers to the region, like Russia, even as it exports instability outside the Middle East. The chaos is the result of the Obama administration's Middle East strategy. Had the president merely sought to minimize America's footprint in the region, there are many options he could have pursued that would have been less toxic than realigning U.S. interests with those of Iran. Obama says he sought a new geopolitical equilibrium to balance the region. But what he did was tip the scales on behalf of a revolutionary regime that wages war against traditional American allies and spreads bloody chaos.

Where the White House has not actively partnered with the regime in Tehran and its allies, it has chosen to excuse Iranian actions. Ballistic missile tests? No big deal. The kidnapping of 10 American sailors? They were treated really well and released the next day. Laying waste to two of Saudi Arabia's diplomatic missions in Iran? Riyadh was asking for trouble. A genocide in Syria perpetrated by Iran's ally Assad with a huge assist from Iranian forces? That's the price you have to pay for a historic nuclear agreement.

Obama says he has as much to lose as anyone if the Iran deal goes wrong. It's got his name on it, he says. So does the war in Syria.

—Lee Smith

Setting the Record Straight on Fracking

By Thomas J. Donohue

President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

In the hunt for primary election votes, the truth sometimes suffers. This election cycle the truth about hydraulic fracturing certainly has. The debate wasn't helped recently by the administration, which will use its waning days to develop new methane emissions regulations, imposing further needless regulation on natural gas.

Here's the truth about natural gas production: It's safe, produces well-paying jobs, and saves consumers billions of dollars.

Safety. A University of Cincinnati study found no evidence that fracking contaminates water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Yale University reached the same conclusion, but the University of Cincinnati study is significant because natural gas opponents financed it. Additionally, methane emissions from hydraulically fractured natural gas wells are down 79% since 2005. Industry has strong

financial incentives to reduce methane emissions, and it has. Fracking opponents can no longer deny science. Thanks to American innovation and ingenuity, natural gas exploration is environmentally safe.

Jobs and Economic Growth.

Fracking is vital to our economy. According to the Harvard Business School, shale energy development created 2.7 million jobs and added \$43 billion to the U.S. economy in 2014. The shale boom has saved consumers \$780, enough to buy a new clothes dryer. While the industry faces strong headwinds, the current slump won't last forever. Household consumer savings from natural gas are expected to increase to \$1,070 by 2030. With the right policies in place, increased natural gas production could generate an additional \$5.15 trillion in capital investment over the next two decades. And it could create or support an additional 3.5 million jobs, resulting in \$2.52 trillion in new tax revenues for local, state, and federal governments.

Energy Security. The shale revolution

has improved U.S. energy security. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's *U.S. Energy Security Risk Index*, our energy security has improved for three years running primarily because we import only 10% of our energy compared with 30% a decade ago. The U.S. Energy Information Administration announced that hydraulic fracturing now accounts for 51% of U.S. crude production. Fewer imports mean we're less reliant on potentially unfriendly regimes. Perhaps that's why more people support fracking than oppose it.

Our nation is in the midst of a true energy revolution. After decades of fear over potential energy scarcity, we're in an era of energy abundance. Americans deserve to hear that story, and they deserve a policy based on facts. Next time you hear a candidate attack fracking, fight back with the truth. Doing so will be good for our economy, the environment, and energy security.



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
www.uschamber.com/abovethefold

Dividers, Not Unifiers

Obama begets Trump.

BY JONATHAN V. LAST



There's plenty of blame to go around for the creation of Trumpism. The p.c. insanity on college campuses. Globalization and the hollowing out of the working class. ISIS in Paris and San Bernardino. The broadcast media that donated \$1.898 billion in free media to the cause. Let's stipulate all of that and much else besides.

But for a moment, consider the contributions of Barack Obama. Because as divisive as Donald Trump is, all he has done is raise the bar set by the most divisive president since Reconstruction.

As an empirical matter, it's maybe more precise to say that Obama is the most divisive president since Eisenhower, because that's when Gallup began measuring such things: By the pollster's reckoning, the partisan gap in Obama's 2012 approval rating is a yawning, historic 76 points. Remember how divisive the Bush years were? The Obama years have been worse.

Jonathan V. Last is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

And it's not just a partisan divide. In 2014, a *Washington Post*/ABC News poll asked respondents if they viewed Obama as more of a divider or unifier. It wasn't even close among independents, 59 percent of whom said he's been a divider.

Where would people get such an idea? Possibly from how Obama treated his opposition. A few days after taking office in 2009, Obama invited a bipartisan group from Congress to the White House to discuss his stimulus proposal. Senator Jon Kyl—not exactly a firebrand—prodded Obama to consider a different mix of spending and tax cuts. Obama's two-word response: “I won.” In August of that year at a presidential speech, Obama told a room of adoring supporters, “I don't want the folks who created the mess to do a lot of talking. I want them to just get out of the way.” In February 2010, Obama convened a bipartisan summit on his health care reform package. At one point, Republicans requested that Obama do a little less filibustering and be a little more respectful of their equal time. His response: “I'm the president.”

Obama's dismissiveness wasn't just in public, either. In June 2010, Sen. Kyl recounted a one-on-one meeting where the president flatly told him that he would not secure America's southern border—that is, enforce the law—unless Congress passed his preferred immigration amnesty plan.

In fairness to Obama, he was—is—the president. The executive and legislative branches are supposed to have an adversarial relationship more often than not. And politics is political, after all. But Obama has also gone out of his way to criticize the judicial branch. In January 2010 he used his State of the Union address to harangue the Supreme Court, while the justices were seated a few feet away.

Still, words are nothing compared with Obama's actions: He rammed Obamacare through without a single Republican vote. And when he couldn't find even a bare majority of votes for his immigration reform or gun control bills, he simply proceeded via executive decree.

When no one on the left was asking for it, Obama pursued the narrowest-possible reading of religious liberty, resulting in Supreme Court showdowns with a Lutheran school, which wanted to be free to hire its own ministers without government interference, and with the Little Sisters of the Poor, who didn't want to be forced to pay for abortifacients. There was no reason for Obama to pursue these policies except as an exercise in premeditated divisiveness. On the question of religious liberty, Obama has sought to *undo* a national consensus and foment conflict. In doing so, he set in motion a slow-rolling constitutional and cultural collision that is likely to end badly. The only reason this chaos isn't apparent to the general public is because Lutherans and nuns don't riot.

Then there's race relations. Obama was elected in large part because of his promise to heal racial wounds. It hasn't worked out that way. In 2001, Gallup found that 70 percent of blacks and 62 percent of whites thought race relations in America were somewhat or very good. By the time Obama was inaugurated those numbers had

DAVE CLEGG

flipped, with 61 percent of blacks and 70 percent of whites (having just absolved themselves by voting for Obama, one suspects) rating race relations as good. During Obama's tenure, both numbers have been in freefall. Today, only 51 percent of blacks and 45 percent of whites think relations between the races are good.

What happened? First came Obama's decision not to prosecute two members of the New Black Panthers who had been charged with voter intimidation for their actions outside a Philadelphia polling place on Election Day in 2008. (In case you think the New Black Panthers are just a bunch of scamps, in 2014 two other members of the group were arrested for plotting to kill the chief of police in Ferguson, Mo.)

Then came Obama's penchant for wading into every racial police controversy that reached the front page of the *New York Times*. He took sides against the Cambridge cops in their arrest of Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates. The police in this case were almost certainly in the wrong; but no one needed the president of the United States preening about it. He did the same with the death of Trayvon Martin, showing up unscheduled at a press availability to talk about the case the week after George Zimmerman was acquitted in the shooting. Did Obama come before the cameras to reassure the public and vouch for the rule of law? No. He stoked the fires, telling America, "Trayvon Martin could have been me 35 years ago." This was a ridiculous exaggeration. Martin was (to put it charitably) a troubled teen with a history of problematic behavior; 35 years before, Barack Obama had been a promising student at an elite private school. By likening himself to Martin, Obama was viewing the episode through the most reductive and demagogic lens possible.

When the Michael Brown shooting turned Ferguson into a powder keg, Obama was ready for the cameras, calling it "heartbreaking" and sending his Justice Department in to ferret out wrongdoing. (They found none.) In a world full of real police abuses—such

as the killing of Eric Garner in New York and the shooting of Walter Scott in Charleston—Obama seems to have a knack for tying himself to the cases where the police were actually in the right. It's enough to make one wonder if Obama can't tell the difference between proper and improper police conduct—or if he just doesn't care.

All of which lead to Obama's semi-embrace of the Black Lives Matter movement. As Heather Mac Donald has documented, Black Lives Matter is not an innocent college protest movement. It is an ugly strain of anarchic racialism that has led not just to the defense of looting but to the killing of police officers. Obama does not merely refuse to condemn Black Lives Matter—he attempts to rationalize it, explaining, "There is a specific problem that is happening in the African-American community that's not happening in other communities."

To his credit, President Obama has never offered to pay the legal fees of supporters who assault protesters or

warned/promised violent riots should he not get his way. Donald Trump may be Obama's heir, but Trump has raised the stakes.

But it's important to understand that Trump is Obama's heir—or, at the very least, the man who wants to inherit the world Obama made. Part of the reason we have Trump today is that Obama set the table by dividing the country so completely; maneuvering so as to pit Americans against one another.

One of the hallmarks of the great dividers, of course, is that they never shut up about how hard they're *really* trying to unite everyone. Two weeks ago, as violence broke out in a series of incidents at his rallies, Trump insisted, against all evidence, "I'm a uniter."

And back in 2012, as he was accusing the Republican party of waging a "war on women," Obama insisted, "I don't think . . . anybody who's been watching the campaign would say that in any way we have tried to divide the country. We've always tried to bring the country together." ♦

He's a One-Man Band

A do-it-yourself presidential campaign won't work.

BY FRED BARNES

Donald Trump was wise to decline to join a 13th and final Republican presidential debate. He has little new to say and not much that's compelling or interesting. He began the 11th debate by calling Mitt Romney "a failed candidate" and "an embarrassment to everybody." And in his next-to-last comment, he insisted his rivals "don't deserve" any credit for the record Republican turnout in primaries and caucuses.

Trump is a resourceful and clever

candidate. His tweets are pungent. His ability to capitalize on free media is extraordinary, sparing himself the cost of blanketing voters with TV ads. He spurns advice from those who know far more than he does about serious issues. On *Morning Joe* last week, he was asked whom he speaks to about foreign and national security matters. "I'm speaking with myself, number one," he said. "My primary consultant is myself."

For all the success this approach has brought Trump in advancing toward the Republican nomination, it won't work in the general election against Hillary Clinton, or even

Fred Barnes is an executive editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

against Bernie Sanders. If he pursues it, he'll lose badly and bring the GOP down with him.

Trump hasn't locked up the Republican nomination yet, but let's assume he does. As weak a candidate as Clinton is, he'll start out trailing her. No doubt he'll attack her relentlessly and probably effectively. That won't be enough. To win, he'll have to change himself and modify the way he operates.

In the primaries, Trump has been a one-man band. He has an advance staff to set up his appearances and speeches. But that's it. With few exceptions, it's all he has needed, since his performances have been at the center of his campaign.

But general elections are different. As nominee, Trump won't be concentrating on states one at a time. A national effort requires "a professional apparatus that's a complement to the campaign behind his performances," says Scott Reed, the chief political adviser to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Reed was campaign manager for nominee Bob Dole in 1996. Trump may view the Republican consultant class skeptically, but he'll need to tap into it for a field operation and policy development team.

North Carolina, a must-win for a Republican nominee, is a state in which Trump would have to deploy a strong organization. He "won the North Carolina primary with very little ground game and virtually no radio or TV," says GOP strategist Marc Rotterman. "To win in the fall, Team Trump is going to have to bulk up its efforts. Hillary Clinton is already hiring some of the folks who worked in North Carolina for Obama in '08 and '12. That team was highly effective."

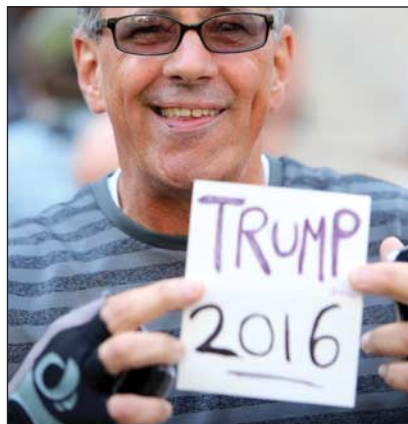
And Trump can't rely on the media to continue treating him like the crown prince of candidates. "He took the TV ratings model and turned it into turnout," Reed says. That was impressive. But against Hillary, he'll discover what liberal bias does to Republican candidates. He won't like the way it puts him on permanent defense.

A bigger problem is the absence of party unity. Trump has summoned Republicans to "unify," as if they're

obligated to line up behind him. Not a chance. Trump must woo them by changing his tune on policies conservatives, among others, detest.

Michael Needham, the CEO of Heritage Action, says that populists and conservatives must unite. Trump, if he's the nominee, "will need to lead an effort that is not only populist but deeply committed to advancing a conservative agenda. If he does, he will

'I know what I'm doing and I listen to a lot of people,' Trump says. But anyone who's watched him struggle to answer the most basic questions on international and defense matters knows this isn't true.



Come autumn, handmade and by-the-seat-of-the-pants won't be enough.

find a conservative movement eager to work with him," Needham wrote in *Real Clear Politics*. This makes political sense. And it's up to Trump to act on it.

Much of Trump's trouble with conservatives is avoidable. Why pretend that Planned Parenthood is a fine organization that just happens to do more than 300,000 abortions annually? Why claim that President George W. Bush lied about WMD in Iraq when the evidence is overwhelmingly and irrefutably to the contrary? Why stick to the idea of deporting 11 million illegal immigrants when a majority of Republicans favors offering a path to legal status—53 percent in the

exit poll of GOP voters in Missouri last week, for instance?

But Trump's half-baked opinions on foreign and national security policy are the biggest turnoff for Republicans from the center to the right. "I know what I'm doing and I listen to a lot of people," he said on *Morning Joe*. But anyone who's watched him struggle to answer the most basic questions on international and defense matters knows this isn't true.

He's been promising since last September to gather the "finest team anyone has put together" on foreign policy to advise him. Yet no team has been assembled. Meanwhile, 117 "members of the Republican national security community" issued a brutally critical statement of opposition to Trump as Republican presidential nominee.

"He would use the authority of his office to act in ways that make America less safe, and which would diminish our standing in the world," the statement said. "Furthermore, his expansive view of how presidential power should be wielded against his detractors poses a distinct threat to civil liberty. [Thus] we commit ourselves to working energetically to prevent the election of someone so utterly unfitted to the office."

Trump would have to swallow a lot of pride to talk to some of these critics. Perhaps that's too much to ask. But having backpedaled on torture, it should be possible for him to have second thoughts about his admiration for Vladimir Putin, his advocacy of waging trade wars, and his anti-Muslim language that "undercuts the seriousness of combating Islamic radicalism by alienating partners in the Islamic world making significant contributions to the effort."

Back in 2014, Trump read Rick Santorum's wonderful book *Blue Collar Conservatives*. It led him to base his presidential bid on appealing to working-class Americans, a constituency Republicans had ignored. But he missed part of that book's message. Santorum as a presidential candidate didn't just deliver speeches. He listened to people. Trump should give that a try.

NEWS.COM

Petryfied

Germany's Trump movement.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Not many people had heard of Frauke Petry, a pretty and very sassy 40-year-old chemist, until she started talking about how a country without borders is not a country at all and railing against the political establishment. It is natural for Americans to think of Petry as a kind of German version of Donald Trump. Since she took over the small protest party Alternative for Germany (AfD) a year ago, she has shifted its focus from economics to immigration. She, too, lauds her country's military. She points to a southern border overrun by migrants, suggesting that it needs to be defended—with force, if necessary. She accuses her country's conservative nabobs of not being conservative at all, of abandoning their most loyal voters to the schemes of various yuppie utopians. She has harvested the scorn of that same establishment, and of the country's most visible pundits. And she, too, is in the process of creating a political earthquake.

In mid-March, 3 of Germany's 16 states held their statewide elections. Petry's Alternative for Germany mostly won. Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats mostly lost. So did Merkel's Social Democrat coalition partners, the formerly socialist-leaning party of Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt, which now rules with Merkel in a semi-permanent establishment coalition. The AfD's performance in Saxony-Anhalt (home of Martin Luther) was astonishing. In its first race ever, it took about a quarter of the vote

(24.2 percent), finishing just behind Merkel to become the state's second party. The Social Democrats lost more than half their voters from the last election (they seem to have moved to the AfD). Turnout was through the roof. Forty percent of the votes cast for the AfD were by new voters.



Frauke Petry at a party conference, November 28, 2015

Right-wing parties occasionally crop up in former East German states like Saxony-Anhalt. They get dismissed as the atavistic protest votes of un-denazified ex-Communists. AfD is tapping into something very different. Look at rich, western Baden-Württemberg, which in some ways resembles California in the Reagan era, during the period when Republican dominance was first being challenged. Baden-Württemberg was a main beneficiary of Germany's postwar industrial boom, particularly in the cities of Stuttgart and Mannheim. It is sophisticated (Heidelberg is there). Its conservative culture looked unshakable. Merkel's CDU had been the top party in every state election for half a century. But in March, the environmentalist Greens came out on top, as the CDU lost almost a third of its vote, falling from 39 to 27 percent, a record low. The SPD, as in Saxony-Anhalt, lost

half its votes, to the point where it had too few seats to join the government.

As in the United States, immigration policy in Germany is made by the federal government. So the AfD has been vaulted to power at a level where it cannot deliver on its main campaign promises concerning migration. Maybe the AfD's voters don't understand politics, but one suspects they do. The higher the stakes of an election get, the higher the AfD's vote totals may rise.

The AfD would be only a shadow of itself had Merkel not promised to admit 800,000 Syrian refugees late last summer, driving half the country

into a frenzy of charitable activity and the other half into an existential panic. In the event, 1.3 million migrants came—most of them economic immigrants, practically all of them Muslims, and only a minority from Syria. There is no workable procedure to sort the humanitarian rescue cases from the opportunists. They will all, eventually, have the right to bring their families. They are still

coming in at the rate of more than 3,000 a day. The March vote came, luckily for Merkel, at a time when the stream had fortuitously paused, as migrants sought to adjust to Macedonia's having closed its border with Greece. This summer the numbers will probably swell.

Merkel reacted with the sangfroid that we have come to expect of presidents in American midterm elections. Like George W. Bush in 2006 and Barack Obama in 2010 and 2014, she very forthrightly said that she had heard the voters' fury, and now she was ready to redouble her efforts to carry out the very policies that provoked it. "In terms of the basic approach," Merkel said in a press conference, "I'm just going to continue doing what I've been doing over the last few months." Her strategy seems to be to gamble that voters do not really feel the worries that they express, and that they

Christopher Caldwell is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

NEWS.COM

will now allow party leaders to go back to making policy unmolested. But this strategy seems more foolish because the situation is getting more risky.

Merkel actually has the semblance of a diplomatic strategy. For 20 years, Turkey—massive, fast-growing, Muslim, radicalizing—has sought to become a member in good standing of the multinational European Union. That would give its 75 million citizens the right to work and live in the EU visa-free. Every time a particularly zealous German utopian (such as former foreign minister Joschka Fischer) urges admitting Turkey in the name of the brotherhood of man or a similarly utopian Englishman (such as Prime Minister David Cameron) proposes it in the name of free markets, European voters hit the roof, and parties like AfD thrive. But EU membership requires the unanimous consent of existing members, and politicians, including Merkel, have promised to block Turkey's accession. Nicolas Sarkozy of France promised he would submit it to a referendum, which would have meant an automatic no. Anyhow, it wasn't going to happen. Politicians were too worried about an EU in which the largest country would have Islam as its state religion. Now they say, "Islam, Shmizlam."

Turkey's leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan is growing more authoritarian by the day. But he is gaining leverage over the EU, too. Most of Germany's refugees—including a few of the terrorists who blew themselves up in Paris last November—pass through Turkey. Merkel therefore thinks a solution can be negotiated with the Turks, and over the last two months, at various summits, it has begun to take shape. Turkey will take back the unvetted migrants who have lately been stranded in Greece. Turkey will also regularize—not stop but regularize—the flow of new refugees into Europe. In return, Europe will accept from Turkey an equal number of *real* Syrian refugees in exchange for the camp-dwellers Turkey takes back. This is the so-called 1:1 resettlement scheme. Note that it is not Germany but *Europe* that is on the hook for the

new refugees. Merkel is promising concessions by *other* countries in order to pay for the damage done by Germany's overpromising last summer.

On top of that, the European Commission promises to "make the legislative proposal to lift the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the end of April 2016." There are a couple of problems. The first is that this is not a treaty in the classic sense but an Obama-style "deal." It lacks democratic legitimacy. Merkel's Germany is negotiating it and expecting it to bind other sovereign countries. The second problem is that the deal seems to give Turkey an incentive for *increasing* the flow of refugees into Europe, or at least threatening to. Donald Trump may have a point when he says in his stump speech that when you send people to the land of the bazaar and the souk, it's not a bad idea to remember that negotiating is a *skill*.

Surf the Internet and you will discover on one page that *Spiegel's* long-time correspondent Hasnain Kazim is being kicked out of Turkey. On the next page you'll see a German member of the European parliament named Elmar Brok trying to bully German elites into backing the deal: "Whoever is against the Turkey treaty is bringing more migrants," Brok says, adding, "The alternative would be a Europe once again divided by barbed wire."

This is the kind of rhetoric that circumscribed German refugee policy until the arrival of the AfD. Politicians and pundits were either unwilling or unable to distinguish between the Europe of Adolf Hitler and the Europe of Helmut Kohl. To argue with Merkel's logic—let alone with her heart—was a sign of Nazi sympathies. Threatening people with the opprobrium their grandparents suffered is a tactic that has outlived its justifiability. In this election there were voters whose grandparents *had not been born* when World War II ended. Even so, there remains a second-order kind of vigilance against anti-immigrant sentiment that is kept up by Germany's businessmen, who believe a Germany that tolerates extremism to be bad for business. But

a Germany in which immigration is out of control might be worse. The mass sexual molestation of women by bands of North African men next to Cologne's cathedral on New Year's Eve has shaken the country. More than a thousand incidents, including outright rapes, have been reported.

One can ask whether all the historical monitions to AfD voters are really meant or even understood, or whether they are pious blather. Is Merkel *really* protecting Germany against a "return to the horrors of the twentieth century"? Perhaps she aims to, but in showing herself indifferent to the fate of her country, she is increasing the risk of what she claims to fear. People expect a sign—almost any sign—that their leaders care whether Germany survives or not. This sign need not be belligerent—it could be the slightest acknowledgment. But the public is not receiving it. From anyone.

Now, through the AfD, they have begun to insist on it democratically. No one can doubt that Petry is right to call the recent election "a very good day for democracy in Germany." But that may be precisely the problem, and the problem may be a deeper one than we think. Europe and the United States have built an enormous architecture of international rules on a foundation of democratic nation-states. This architecture consists of international bureaucracies, treaties guiding global corporations and finance, the informal rules of international migration and world "governance." The problem is that the two are at odds. International organizations require predictability: The Elmar Brooks of the world describe this need for predictability as "international law." Democracies require flexibility: People must have real choices about how they govern themselves. For a while we found a middle way, offering the people *fake* choices about how they govern themselves. But they have seen through it. Now that they have, one of the two—flexibility or predictability—is going to have to go. Merkel has chosen to keep predictability. We should not be too confident that her compatriots, or ours, will make the same choice. ♦

Bro Trudeau

Hot in Washington, chilly in Canada.

BY KELLY JANE TORRANCE

As Donald Trump racked up victory after victory on (the first) Super Tuesday, it wasn't just within the campaigns of his Republican opponents that you could find desolation and despair. In the four hours after results started coming in at 8 P.M., web searches across the country on variations of "how to move to Canada" rose 350 percent. Google first reported the query hadn't been so popular since George W. Bush won reelection in 2004, but by the next day, the company tweeted, "Searches for 'Move to Canada' are higher than at any time in Google history #SuperTuesday."

Conveniently, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau arrived in Washington a week and a half later to give a glimpse of life in the Canadian polity. Americans who reject a shallow, sound-bite-driven politics that prizes spectacle over substance can confidently head north in November—for a shallow, sound-bite-driven politics that prizes spectacle over substance.

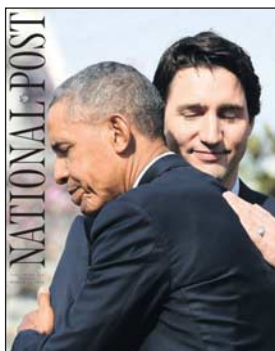
There's no question the northern pageant is the more dazzling one. "There is nary a more exclusive class than those born to world leaders," as *Vanity Fair* wrote on the occasion of the first state dinner honoring a Canadian leader in nearly 20 years. Justin Trudeau, a former drama teacher who secured power last fall just eight years after entering politics, is the son of the legendary prime minister whose following gave rise to the term "Trudeau-mania." The exceedingly handsome

blue-eyed 44-year-old created a bit of that himself. "Justin Fever hits Washington," *Politico* declared in a headline. "The Canadian prime minister's visit has the buttoned-up capital swooning." The *Washington Post* and *New York Times* devoted prime above-the-fold front-page real estate to photographs

of the visit, which was also covered enthusiastically by *Vogue*. The *International Business Times* asked in a headline, "Why is America massively crushing on Canadian PM Justin Trudeau?" while the *Guardian* declared in another, "It's not just Canada that loves Justin Trudeau—the rest of the world does too."

Canada's *National Post* captured the mood in a single image: A photograph of a heartfelt hug between Trudeau and President Barack Obama took up its entire front page.

Indeed, no one seems to have fallen harder for the prime minister than the president. The *New York Times* headlined their new relationship "a budding bromance," and a *Toronto Globe and Mail* editorial declared, "Barack luvs Justin." Obama sees every speech as an opportunity to talk about himself, but this was something special. "We've got a common outlook on what our nations can achieve together," the president said at their joint press conference in the Rose Garden. "He campaigned on a message of hope and of change. His positive and optimistic vision is inspiring young people. At home, he's governing with a commitment to inclusivity and equality. On the world stage, his country is leading on climate change and he cares deeply about development. So, from



The cover of Canada's National Post, March 11

my perspective, what's not to like?"

Indeed, it would be tempting to say that Americans emigrating to Canada in the event of a Trump win this fall would experience President Obama's third term. But Obama would take greater advantage than his younger counterpart has of the more powerful post of prime minister. Guest after guest, arriving to the state dinner, described the prime minister as "impressive." But John Kerry more accurately outlined Trudeau's accomplishments thus far at a State Department lunch earlier that day. "It is clear that the prime minister really has begun to make his mark on Canada's future," he said. "In the few months that he has been in office, he has demonstrated remarkable leadership on refugees, on climate change, on advancing the status of women and girls, and much more."

Those are the issues close to Trudeau's heart, whose importance he likens to saving Western civilization: "That friendship, matched by much hard work, has allowed us to do great things throughout our history—from the beaches of Normandy to the free trade agreement, and now, today, on climate change," he said at the press conference. But his people have different priorities. "Economic confidence has plunged to its lowest point in 20 years, according to a new Ipsos poll," columnist Margaret Wente wrote in the *Globe and Mail* after the Washington visit. A huge drop has occurred since Trudeau's election: "Last July, 65 per cent of us were optimistic about the economy. Today, only 36 per cent of us are optimistic." She recalled that, as world leaders discussed climate change in Paris last fall, polling firm Ipsos asked Canadians to pick their top three worries out of a list of nine. Climate change came in dead last, appearing on the lists of only 13 percent of those polled. Health care, unemployment, and taxes topped the concerns; corruption, immigration control, and crime also beat out climate change.

Trudeau has done nothing about any of them. When the prime minister last month visited Alberta—the backbone of the Canadian economy,

Kelly Jane Torrance is deputy managing editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

but suffering thanks in part to low oil prices—Jen Gerson headlined her *National Post* commentary “Thanks for visiting Alberta Prime Minister. But what, exactly, is the point?” Trudeau offered what he’s become best at offering: uplifting words, spoken with fervent feeling. “Canadians help other Canadians when they’re facing tough times. That’s just how Canada works and that’s what we’re going to do,” he declared—but gave little hint of what he might do. Columnist Colby Cosh had written earlier in the same newspaper, “He is above all earnest, and there are hints his emerging role as a head of government will be mostly to convey earnestness, to serve as a sort of emotional mascot, while his ministers do the work.”

One can’t even count on that earnestness to come wrapped in eloquence. Trudeau was in New York on March 16 for meetings at the United Nations. Having given a full half of his cabinet posts to women, he was greeted enthusiastically at a U.N. Women event. “I’m going to keep saying loud and clearly that I am a feminist until it is met with a shrug,” he said to applause. “It’s just really, really obvious that we should be standing up for women’s rights and trying to create more equal societies. Like, duh.”

No, he’s not exactly his father’s son. Pierre Trudeau could be vulgar, but he was more often droll. (Less beloved by the Americans, the elder Trudeau, when told President Richard Nixon had called him an “a—hole,” responded, “I’ve been called worse things by better people.”) His influences included Cardinal Newman and Jacques Maritain; his son’s favorite writer is Stephen King. His policies could be pernicious, but he detailed them confidently; his son can’t even seem to settle on any. The younger Trudeau has already said he’ll break his election promise of keeping the deficit to \$10 billion. The only other thing he’s revealed about his upcoming first budget is that it will eliminate the planned increase in the retirement age from 67 to 65 that his predecessor Stephen Harper instituted.

And what did he accomplish in his three-day visit to Washington? Obama

called their meeting “very productive”; Trudeau called it “extremely productive.” Here’s how the *Globe and Mail* described it: “Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Obama sketched out a broad continental climate-change strategy they had discussed and signed off on cross-border travel and trade reforms, including a joint approach to redressing faulty no-fly lists. However, they did not reach an agreement in the softwood lumber dispute.” No wonder the paper headlined the piece “Personal bond between Trudeau, Obama centerpiece of Washington trip.” Nothing of any substance was parleyed. The previous softwood lumber deal expired last year, and negotiations on a new one promise to be the touchiest issue between the two countries since the Keystone pipeline. (Much of the wood harvested in Canada is on crown property, and U.S. producers argue that the government’s low harvesting fees amount to an unfair subsidy.) But both leaders called it merely an “irritant,” with Obama glibly telling reporters that “we have some very smart people,

and they’ll find a way to resolve it.”

Speaking of Keystone, Trudeau didn’t. During last year’s election, he declared himself a supporter of the pipeline that would have brought more Canadian oil—and jobs—to the United States had it survived Obama’s veto. Now in power, Trudeau seems unwilling to commit himself to anything besides bromides. Asked in Alberta if he would approve the Energy East pipeline—which would send that province’s oil east to other parts of Canada and the United States—if it passes regulatory muster, “Trudeau’s answer wandered all over the map without ever answering the question,” the *Calgary Sun* reported.

That lack of substance hasn’t stopped Canadian—and now U.S.—newspapers from filling their pages with reports of his performances. As one Canadian newspaperman told me, “Justin’s good copy.” In this, he’s not unlike the man whose presidency so many Americans would apparently flee to Canada to avoid. They should keep in mind, though, that the only people

NEW FROM JOSEPH EPSTEIN

WIND SPRINTS: SHORTER ESSAYS

\$24.00 ■ Hardcover ■ 6" x 9" ■ April 1, 2016 ■ ISBN: 978-1-60419-100-4



JOSEPH EPSTEIN'S *Wind Sprints: Shorter Essays* is the third volume of essays from Axios Press, after the much acclaimed *Essays in Biography* (2012) and *A Literary Education and Other Essays* (2014). Containing 143 short essays, its subjects range from domestic life to current social trends to an appraisal of “contemporary nuttiness.”

“A master of the essay form returns with a collection of brief pieces spanning nearly 20 years.”

Kirkus Reviews (Starred Review)

“There’s treasure in every sentence. It’s like spoon-eating caviar.”

Christopher Buckley, author of *Thank You for Smoking*

Available from leading booksellers everywhere and at AxiosInstitute.org
Books to help you think through your personal choices



taking punches at Trump rallies are the candidate's supporters and opponents. Trudeau, on the other hand, took down a Conservative senator a few years ago

with his own hands. The prime minister only gets serious in the ring when it's just for show, though: It was a charity boxing match. ♦

Obamacare Again?

A second chance for the Little Sisters.

BY ILYA SHAPIRO & JOSH BLACKMAN

In what has become a spring tradition, Obamacare returns to the Supreme Court this month, the fourth time in five years. Fortunately for the religious nonprofits challenging the law's contraceptive mandate—including the Little Sisters of the Poor, a monastic order that cares for impoverished elderly—the results of the Court's second and third encounters with the act can together answer their prayer for relief.

Two years ago, in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, the justices ruled 5-4 that the government could not force owners of closely held corporations to provide morally objectionable contraceptives to employees. (Hobby Lobby's owners believe devices that can prevent the implantation of fertilized eggs, such as morning-after pills and IUDs, violate the Christian prohibition on abortion.) The decision was based on the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), which bars the government from imposing a "substantial burden" on religious liberty unless it's "the least restrictive means" of advancing a "compelling government interest."

Then last year, in *King v. Burwell*,

the Court refused to defer to the IRS's reading of the phrase "established by the State" in determining whether Obamacare's tax credits applied to plans bought through federal, not just state-created, exchanges. Chief Justice John Roberts's majority opinion declared the bureaucracy lacked the requisite authority and "expertise" to interpret this "central" part of the act. Administrative agencies cannot give themselves the power to answer questions of profound "economic and political significance." (In its 6-3 decision, the Court found another way to rule in favor of the administration.)

What do these cases have in common? They demonstrate that it's Congress's duty to craft delicate religious accommodations to protect conscience. The bureaucracy simply doesn't have the ability—meaning both authority and know-how—to create legal rules in this area.

The Little Sisters of the Poor, whose case has been consolidated with several others under *Zubik v. Burwell* and will be heard March 23, argue that the Obama administration's "accommodation" still violates their religious free exercise. Houses of worship are exempt from the contraceptive mandate, but nonprofits the government considers insufficiently religious to merit that exemption—such as educational institutions and social-service providers—must structure their insurance coverage

in a way that still fulfills the mandate. So another RFRA battle looms, which in the absence of Justice Antonin Scalia seems destined for a 4-4 deadlock that's not just unsatisfying but impracticable: Given the disparate lower-court rulings that would stand with a tie, the mandate would survive in some parts of the country but not others.

Conveniently, there's an alternate argument, based on the *Hobby Lobby* and *King* rulings, that could command a majority opinion: The agencies lack both the expertise and power to exempt some religious groups while forcing others—deemed "less" religious—to be complicit in what they consider sin. By rejecting this bureaucratic assertion of executive authority, *Zubik* can thus be resolved without further politically fraught haggling over RFRA.

To better understand this elegant solution that sidesteps the culture-war debate over reproductive rights and what constitutes an abortifacient, let's step back and look at the history of the mandate at issue.

Congress didn't actually enact a contraceptive mandate. Obamacare's statutory text only requires that insurance cover, "with respect to women, such additional preventive care . . . as provided for in comprehensive guidelines supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration." Congress did not define what constitutes "preventive care." That subsidiary agency within the Department of Health and Human Services recommended that "preventive care" be interpreted to include all federally approved contraceptives. HHS agreed.

Facing a wave of public outrage, HHS belatedly acknowledged that its interpretation would force millions of religious believers to violate the teachings of their various faiths. In response, it worked with the Departments of Labor and Treasury to adjust the relevant regulations. They exempted certain religious employers—houses of worship and their auxiliaries—from the mandate altogether. Religious nonprofits the agencies deemed insufficiently religious to qualify for the exemption would receive an "accommodation" allowing them to discharge



Supreme Court protest,
March 25, 2014

Ilya Shapiro is a senior fellow in constitutional studies at the Cato Institute. Josh Blackman is a constitutional law professor at South Texas College of Law in Houston. They filed a brief on Cato's behalf supporting the plaintiffs in *Zubik v. Burwell*.

the mandate another way: They could notify either HHS or their insurance companies of their objection, and insurers would then offer contraceptive coverage directly to their employees at no cost.

HHS doesn't say that RFRA compels the exemption or the alternative-compliance mechanism. Instead, it asserts that the relevant Obamacare provisions give the agency the authority to decide which religious groups should be exempted and which "accommodated." Still, the government concedes that the accommodation imposes at least a "minimal" burden on religious free exercise.

The alternative-compliance regulation, however, is not authorized by the text of Obamacare. No provision of that statute empowers any administrative agency to distinguish among religious nonprofits, exempting some while burdening others. The statute doesn't authorize HHS or any other department to burden the free exercise of *anyone*. To paraphrase Chief Justice Roberts's opinion in *King*: "It is especially unlikely that Congress would have delegated this decision," without clear statutory guidance, to an agency that "has no expertise in crafting" religious accommodations. Or as Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote a decade ago in *Gonzales v. Oregon*, in which the Justice Department attempted to trump a state drug-dispensing law: "The idea that Congress gave the [executive branch] such broad and unusual authority through an implicit delegation is not sustainable."

The Obama administration's justifications for discriminating among religious groups reflect its unprecedented home-brewed approach to protecting religious exercise. The agencies concocted an exemption for churches but not associated religious organizations based on its assertion that employees of the latter are "less likely" than the former "to share their employer's . . . faith." That HHS refused to exempt people who work for Little Sisters of the Poor—a group of nuns who vow obedience to the pope!—illustrates how out-of-its-league it was in evaluating religiosity.

Congress has expressly exempted nonprofits, including all the *Zubik* plaintiffs, from the antidiscrimination provisions of federal employment law. The Little Sisters of the Poor can hire exclusively people of their own faith. Yet administrative agencies, with no legal basis, issued a blanket judgment that *all* religious nonprofits have employees less likely to share their employers' religious beliefs. (At the same time, they removed the regulatory requirement that houses of worship primarily employ people who share their faith to avail themselves of the exemption.) There was not even an option for a case-by-case judgment.

Such haphazard and unauthorized guesswork by anonymous civil servants, in the face of longstanding congressional policy to the contrary, cannot justify an infringement of religious freedom. That HHS, Labor, and Treasury's rulemaking was premised not on health, labor, or financial criteria, but on the departments' subjective evaluation about which employees more closely adhere to the religious views of their employers, confirms that the authority claimed by these agencies is, to again quote

Gonzales v. Oregon, "beyond [their] expertise and incongruous with the statutory purposes and design."

Earnest and profound questions regarding "the mystery of human life," as the Supreme Court has discussed in its abortion jurisprudence, are the quintessential issues of "significance" that the Constitution does not intend agencies to resolve absent clear delegation. The administration's attempt to force religious nonprofits to violate religious teaching regarding the start and nature of human life lays claim to an extravagant statutory power affecting fundamental liberties—one that Obamacare simply does not grant.

The combined holdings of *Hobby Lobby* and *King* present a result that most of the justices should be able to support: The administrative state overstepped its bounds, and religious nonprofits deserve at least the same exemption that many for-profit employers now enjoy. In addition to avoiding the ideologically charged battle over RFRA, this alternate path will allow the Court to set down an important limitation on executive power that will bind the next president, whoever he or she may be. ♦

Warning Libels

Giving GMO foods a bad—and costly—rap.

BY BLAKE HURST

In July, Vermont will become the first state to require that food made with GMOs (genetically modified organisms) be labeled. This presents an interesting challenge for food companies, who will either have to segregate and label products headed toward the Green Mountain State, label everything they produce, or just decline to offer their wares to the citizens of Vermont.

The obvious impact on interstate commerce has made the question of

product labeling a federal one: State-by-state labeling would be a logistical nightmare for the food industry, in turn increasing costs for consumers. A bill that would override the Vermont mandate and set up a system of voluntary labeling made it through the House, but failed, last week, to pass the Senate.

One of the sticking points is just how much labeling will increase costs. The label lobby commissioned a study that purportedly proves beyond a shadow of econometric doubt that labeling will cost the average family less than \$10 a year. More plausible is

Blake Hurst is a farmer in Missouri.

the estimate by a Cornell University economist suggesting food costs could go up some \$500 per family.

Part of that higher estimate comes from the cost when consumers choose pricey organic food. Much of the funding for the pro-labeling campaign comes from the organic food industry, which expects GMO labels to frighten shoppers into purchasing more of their products. Organics being generally more expensive than the conventional alternatives, consumers switching to organics may spend hundreds of dollars more per year.

Even if consumers shrug off Vermont-style labels, there will be costs. Most GMOs people consume come from corn and soybeans of the sort I grow on my farm in Missouri. Nationwide, well over 90 percent of each crop is genetically modified. They are handled in bulk. We combine the grain, dump it in a truck,

and take it to one of those huge grain silos you see when you travel across the Midwest. If farmers have to segregate GMO from non-GMO crops, the infrastructure in those facilities will have to be multiplied. And there are other costs: Every time we move from a GMO crop to a non-GMO crop, we'll have to carefully clean all the machinery so there's no cross-contamination.

Proponents of labeling are adamant that consumers have the right to know what is in their foods. Consumers have demonstrated that preference in dozens of public surveys, some of which show over 90 percent approval of GMO labeling. On the other hand, a recent survey conducted by agricultural economist Jayson Lusk suggests that 80 percent of consumers are also in favor of labeling foods containing DNA.

The consumer no doubt wants to know lots of things. She might want to know what I'm wearing when I drive my combine through the field. She might want to know my political views, what my farm pays our employees, and whether the corn or soybeans are harvested in the morning or the

afternoon. The time of day a crop is harvested actually does affect its nutritional value—indeed, it makes a bigger difference than whether the crop was produced from genetically modified seeds. As every reputable scientific and regulatory agency looking at the question has found, there is no difference in food safety or nutritional value between conventional and genetically modified foodstuffs.

But what of such facts when there are celebrities to be heard from? Gwyneth Paltrow called for GMO labeling at a committee hearing on Capitol Hill last summer. It was a moment that defied parody: a movie star playing the part of a concerned mother doing performance art about a subject in which her knowledge base is approximately zero “testifying” in front of a panel of solons not well known for their scientific and agricultural expertise.



Gwyneth Paltrow,
biogenetics policy adviser

But what do you expect when even major food manufacturers are starting to play to the fear of GMOs? The Hershey Company announced last year they will be moving away from using sugar from genetically modified sugar beets. There is no chemical difference between sugar from GMO sugar beets and sugar from non-GMO sugar cane. You can't tell the difference between the two with any test. There is no genetically modified material in sugar of any kind—the proteins where the genetic material resides are removed during processing. The only way to know the origin of the sugar is to track it from the field to the candy bar.

Still, it's a nice diversionary tactic: In a nation suffering from obesity and diabetes, a company selling sugar-laden candies brands itself responsible by refusing to use perfectly safe sugar made from perfectly safe plants bred by a perfectly safe technology.

There is another wrinkle in the labeling controversy. As Nathanael Johnson writes in the webzine *Grist*, it's not clear what counts as genetically modified food. For example,

if genetic modification means that genes from one species have been moved to another, then wouldn't fruit from grafted trees have to be labeled as GMO? And what about ruby red grapefruit? The product of mutagenesis (the exposure of seeds to radiation to cause mutations), ruby red grapefruit is not, by the typical definition, genetically modified. Hence the fruit's eligibility for the organic market. But if consumers have a right to know about genes that have been moved, shouldn't they know about genes that are changed by radiation? Johnson mentions several other breeding techniques that might or might not be considered genetic modification.

These are just some of the questions that will have to be addressed by any law dealing with GMO labeling. Senator Pat Roberts, chairman of the Agriculture Committee, saw his bill overriding state mandates fail on a procedural vote March 16. The Kansas senator's compromise would have encouraged food companies to make GMO information available either through a website linked to a code on the food package or via a toll-free number. If voluntary compliance was less than 75 percent, Internet-linked “smart labels” would be required in two years. Democrats refused the compromise. One gets the sense they won't settle for anything less than a skull and crossbones.

We need a solution, and I think I have one. Let's require labels on any foodstuff that has been changed at any time in the past 10,000 years by human ingenuity. The label would read:

This product contains organic material altered from its natural state by human intervention. Some changes were introduced thousands of years ago, when our forefathers selected seeds from the best-tasting or most-productive plants. Some changes were introduced by inbreeding or crossbreeding. Some changes were made by causing mutations with radiation, some by dosing seeds with chemicals. Some alterations were the result of sophisticated laboratory techniques. The sum of all these changes has been a huge boon to mankind. *Bon appétit!* ♦

NEWSCOM

Debriefing Mike Murphy

Why the Right failed to Rise

BY MATT LABASH

Los Angeles

On a pleasant Super Tuesday afternoon—one of 10 or 11 Super Tuesdays we seem to be having this March—I am standing in the bloated carcass of that much-maligned beast known as The Establishment. In the unmarked suite of a generic mid-Wilshire office building (The Establishment can't be too careful, with all these populists sharpening pitchforks), I have come to Right to Rise, Jeb Bush's \$118 million super-PAC, to watch Mike Murphy and his crew pack it in.

If you've been reading your *Conventional Wisdom Herald*, you know that Murphy, one of the most storied and furiously quick-witted political consultants of the last three decades, has lately been cast as the Titanic skipper who steered Jeb's nine-figure colossus smack into an iceberg. That donor loot helped buy Jeb all of four delegates before he dropped from the race, returning to a quiet life of low-energy contemplation. The *Los Angeles Times* called Right to Rise "one of the most expensive failures in American political history," which is among the more charitable assessments. (If you ever find yourself in Mike Murphy's position, never, ever look at Twitter.)

In his early career, profilers taking note of his long hair, leather jackets, and loud Hawaiian shirts made Murphy sound like a cross between the wild man of Borneo, Jimmy Buffett, and an unmade futon. These days, his hair is short, and there's a little less of it to account for.

Matt Labash is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

He looks more like a shambling film professor, in smart-guy faculty glasses, Lacoste half-zip, and khakis—his loud rainbow-striped socks being the only sartorial tell that he might still, as a Republican elder once told a reporter, be "in need of adult supervision."

Murphy bellows a greeting and introduces me around to his crew, who are packing and tying up loose ends, such as calculating pro-rata donor refunds for what's left of the

money (about \$12 million). The office will be vacated by the following week. "This is Matt Labash," he says to the troops. "He's here to write my political obituary!"

There are strategy people, and finance people, and blonde people—striking women who all seem to be from Texas. There are the oppo guys, or as Murphy (who once facetiously tagged himself "the merchant of mud" and who in his wayward youth had "Go Neg" vanity plates) calls them, the Department of Ungentlemanly Warfare. "You should see their file on you," he warns.

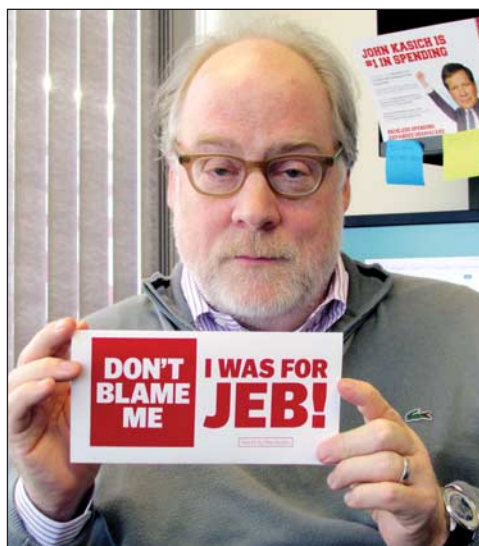
"A donkey?!!!" chimes in Paul

Lindsay, Right to Rise's communications director.

"Doesn't that hurt?" Murphy cross-examines.

Lindsay used to work for American Crossroads, the Karl Rove super-PAC that has also seen better days. When asked why super-PAC influence seems to be waning, Lindsay says, "Probably me. Whatever I touch." Murphy adds, "It's like that Bill Macy movie *The Cooler* [about a bringer-of-bad-luck guy casinos pay to jinx winning gamblers]. Lindsay just walks by, and the story goes bad." (Murphy, an inveterate film buff, moved to Los Angeles a decade ago to dabble in screenwriting, partly to escape politics—"the lowest rung of show business.")

As their communications guy, Lindsay, Murphy says, will stay on longer than the rest, in case urgent *Politico*



queries still need to be fielded. Murphy then adopts the tone of a breathless *Politico* reporter: *Is it true that when you folded up the office, there was copier toner on the ground? And that equals a California hazardous waste spill? We're printing it!*

Office décor is a reminder of a campaign lost. The “coffee bar” is a desk full of whiskey bottles, with everything on offer from populist Trumpian Fireball to finer Woodford Reserve. In keeping with the Irish-wake vibe, I go full-tilt elitist, helping myself to a 10-year-old Macallan that I take neat, not because I want to, but because the high-dollar super-PAC’s ghetto refrigerator doesn’t even have an icemaker.

There are pictures of Jeb, of course, beaming beatifically while surrounded by smiling multicultural children. The Department of Ungentlemanly Warfare has posted photos they’ve dug up of other candidates in compromising positions, such as Chris Christie inhaling ice cream while looking like he’s storing four bags of doughnuts under his shirt. Murphy has a special contempt for Christie these days, since Christie broke early for Donald Trump, becoming his Franz von Papen, the former Weimar chancellor who thought Hitler could be civilized once in office: “They made him ambassador to Turkey, next thing you know, he’s in Nuremberg.”

The primaries countdown clock is now permanently set to zero. And next to it hangs a large Donald Trump piñata that is fitted with real Marco Rubio ankle-boots, the metrosexual atrocities Rubio was caught wearing that look like something Deney Terrio would sport on an old episode of *Dance Fever*. In a box nearby are the severed heads of previous Trump piñatas. Right to Rise was pilloried by conservative media types for not going after Trump hard enough. But staffers have clearly been squaring accounts behind closed doors.

We take a seat in Murphy’s office, as he apologizes for the knockabout furniture, which he says has worked out great after they procured it from a crime scene and scraped the blood off. Even outside his window, the bell seems to be tolling. The building is in L.A.’s museum district, “which is where we belong now,” says Murphy, always faster than would-be hecklers, beating them to jokes at his own expense. Down in the street, rough-customer homeless guys wander by with armfuls of plastic bags. “Great wino fights on the corner there,” Murphy cracks. “There’s a guy with a devastating left who tends to dominate.”

In actuality, it’s the same corner where rapper Biggie Smalls was gunned down in his Suburban while stopped at a red light. One of the finance girls keeps a picture of Biggie in her office out of respect. Or maybe to illustrate how much worse things could be. Or maybe she’s just being mindful of what John McCain liked to say, back when Murphistopheles (as McCain called him) would ride shotgun with his quixotic presidential client in their 2000 Straight Talk Express days: “It’s always darkest before it goes completely black.”

Murphy’s clients have won around two dozen Senate and gubernatorial races (everyone from John Engler to Mitt Romney to Christie Todd Whitman to Arnold Schwarzenegger). If you notice a theme, it’s that he often helps Republicans win in Democratic states. Likewise, he’s played a major role in assisting three losing presidential candidates (McCain, Lamar! Alexander, and Jeb!).

Surveying his decommissioned troops, the 53-year-old general sighs with mock-wistfulness: “These people all used to have great careers in politics. . . . Now we’re going to Kinko’s to print off some résumés. We understand there’s a job fair at Quiznos.”

Murphy, of course, has no need to go to Quiznos, unless he’s just in the mood for a Spicy Monterey sandwich. He’s had a robust career as a pundit, formerly serving as a columnist for *Time* and a regular on *Meet the Press*. He figures he’ll eventually reenter the arena, while he awaits “a Weather Channel bidding war.”

The punditry leads to speeches, where he does his comic shtick. He counts comedians like Dennis Miller and *Simpsons* writer Dana Gould among his good friends, and has a “chunk sheet”

listing his bits, just like a real working comic. Though unlike his showbiz friends, he’s working rooms like that of a Chicago payday loan association, where attendees were excited to have their first banquet, just like real bankers. Here, Murphy slides into a thick Chicago accent, imitating his host, “All right you f—s, shut up! We got a call to order!”

He also has tech investments to fall back on and real-estate holdings (from undeveloped bug-out property in Nova Scotia to rentals in the Hollywood Hills). On the showbiz side, he’s represented by CAA and keeps an office on the Paramount lot, where his coffee cups rattled as the 27-year-old high school kids from *Glee* had noisy dance-offs. He’s sold scripts to 20th Century Fox and HBO, none of which have been made, leaving his IMDb page essentially blank. Unless he’s the same Mike Murphy who played “Rico’s henchman” in a Mexican drug-cartel short, *Hell on the Border*. (He wishes, he says, but assures me he’s not.)

Then there's the main chance. Murphy first cracked the political-consultant game back in 1982, cutting political ads from his dorm room and later dropping out of Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, figuring he dodged a career "stamping visas in Istanbul." Since then he's sold one political consultancy and his share of another, and is partner in a third (Revolution), for which he mostly does corporate work. He generally prefers this to campaigns these days, since even though there's accountability to corporate boards, "you don't have to face 22 people who have no experience, telling you how to do your job from their safe Twitter perch in journalism."

Murphy's clients have won around two dozen Senate and gubernatorial races (everyone from John Engler to Mitt Romney to Christie Todd Whitman to Arnold Schwarzenegger). If you notice a theme, it's that he often helps Republicans win in Democratic states. Likewise, he's played a major role in assisting three losing presidential candidates (McCain, Lamar! Alexander, and Jeb!). If you again notice a theme, it's that his presidential candidates sometimes seem more excited about their first names than the electorate does.

Like all hired guns in his trade, he's taken his share of mercenary money just for the check. But Murphy says when it comes to presidentials, he thinks it matters more and is a sucker for long shots. "I have friends I believe in who want to run. I'm a romantic, so I keep falling for that pitch." Jeb wasn't exactly a long shot, I remind him. Like hell he wasn't, says Murphy. It's a hard slog, not being a Grievance Candidate this year. "He was the guy who was handing out policy papers when Trump was handing out broken bottles."

Since a candidate is not permitted by law to discuss campaign specifics with his super-PAC once he declares, a law Murphy vows was strictly observed ("I'm too pretty to go to jail"), I ask him what he would've told Jeb during the campaign had he been allowed to. Over the years, Murphy has forged a reputation of telling his candidates the truth, no matter how bitter the medicine. (He once had to tell a congressional client that his toupee was unconvincing.) Though Murphy's tongue is usually on a hair-trigger, he stops and ponders this question for a beat. He then says he would've told Jeb, "What the f— were we thinking?"

Even pre-campaign, however, when they were allowed to coordinate as Right to Rise was amassing its unprecedented

war chest, well before Trump's ascendancy, both knew that despite the media billing Bush the prohibitive favorite—a position they both detested—they were facing long odds. (The assumption was Ted Cruz would be occupying the anger-candidate slot that Trump has instead so ably filled.)

Murphy says Bush regarded this election as a necessary tussle between the politics of optimism and grievance. At a preseason dinner, Murphy gave Bush his best guess of their chances of winning—under 50 percent. "He grinned," Murphy says, "and named an even lower number. I remember leaving the dinner with a mix of great pride in Jeb's principled courage and with a sense of apprehension about the big headwinds we would face." And though he'd also have told his friend, if he'd been allowed to speak



Murphy, right, with Senator Fred Thompson, left, and client John McCain on the night of McCain's loss in the South Carolina GOP primary, February 19, 2000

to him, that he was proud of Jeb "for fighting his corner," ultimately, Murphy admits, "there is no campaign trick or spending level or candidate whisperer that can prevent a party from committing political suicide if it wants to."

Murphy hadn't done a political race since former eBay chief Meg Whitman's colossally expensive 2010 California gubernatorial loss to Jerry Brown (she spent \$144 million of her own money). So he essentially came out of political retirement to help his old pal's super-PAC, much as he'd guided Jeb's gubernatorial victories in 1998 and 2002. Murphy's been threatening to quit politics for good since at least the early aughts, hoping to find more reputable employment, "like opening a dog track—nicer class of people."

All of this, of course, has led to what Mr. Trump might call some yuge paydays. Just how huge Murphy's take was from running Right to Rise became a point of contention shortly after Jeb's demise. A CNN.com report featured an

anonymous bundler grumbling that Murphy was paid \$14 million, a charge Murphy instantly called “absolute bullshit” on Twitter, saying compensation had deliberately been capped. He vowed his fees were in the mid-six figures, with Right to Rise’s treasurer backing him up.

The CNN.com story, which had hit the media wind tunnel, was eventually updated to include Murphy’s denials. The new version made it to the *Drudge Report*. To Murphy’s chagrin, and in keeping with the star-crossed nature of Jeb’s 2016 run, the amended piece on *Drudge* was overshadowed by breaking news: “New genitalia woe for Hitler—he had ‘micro-penis.’”

As Murphy lamented on Twitter, “Hard to get truth out on web when competing with Hitler’s micro-penis story . . .”

Clueless nonmembers of the chattering classes might wonder why it’s a big deal what a political consultant got paid by a loaded political candidate who is hardly a rube and who’d done two prior runs with the same consultant. Or they might wonder why journalists seem so scandalized that outside millions couldn’t buy an election, when usually journalists pretend to be scandalized that they can. Or they might wonder, if Mike Murphy milked the Jeb campaign until it moaned, why Bush would send me an email, after the stories appeared, saying, “Mike is a great talent and a loyal friend. We both share a vision for the future of the conservative movement that is hopeful and optimistic.”

Unfortunately for Murphy, clueless nonmembers of the chattering classes don’t write headlines, like the one in the *Washington Post*, saying, “Jeb Bush’s Presidential Campaign Was a Success—for Its Consultants.”

I reached out to Murphy for this story while he was still in mid-tempest. You could tell his sunny demeanor had clouded a bit. As he put it in an email: “Sort of going to ground now since I cannot win with this horse-shit media stuff. . . . ‘Spent too much . . . spent too little on Trump . . . didn’t spend all Jeb’s Money to help Marco (that one being a WEEKLY STANDARD specialty). . . . Didn’t understand Jeb was establishment candidate’ (f—ing DUH). . . . But since this is

the year of the Howling Moron, starting with the eels in my business and carrying through to 90 percent of the people in your corrupt business selling tickets to Trump’s Mussolini act . . . let’s at least kick the idea around.”

Once the idea was kicked, Murphy agreed to let me hang out during the Right to Rise shutdown and to gather his reflections on the Year of the Howling Moron, as he put it. He agreed to play Snidely Whiplash tying conventional wisdom to the tracks. To be as offensive as the spirit moves, since as Thomas Paine said, “He who dares not offend cannot be honest.” To go at some of the hoary establishment/antiestablishment clichés that journalists wear like floaties in their sea of uncertainty. At least until a few election returns come in, when they can explain what was going to happen all along while donning X-ray hindsight-goggles.

Murphy laid down only one precondition: “That you put in this piece that THE WEEKLY STANDARD has become a Rubio-Love Spank Mag—and Kristol can’t cut it!”

Fine.

When I catch up with Murphy in L.A., we have a series of conversations: at his office, at his house, at his favorite old-school haunts like Greenblatt’s Deli and a Koreatown bar, at the Chinese dive “that has dust on the curtains from the Nixon administration,” and in his car, the make of which he semi-jokingly puts off the record. Not because it’s a Bentley or anything. But because it’s foreign-made, says the sheepish Motor City native. “I’m a Detroit guy, I feel bad about it.”

Except for the occasional Twitter outburst or solitary quote sprinkled here or there, the usually loquacious Murphy (it is considered journalistic malpractice to approach him without your tape recorder already running) had largely gone mute during his Right to Rise hitch. He even seemed intent on deflecting attention from himself. When *Real Clear Politics* profiled him at the campaign’s launch, he declined to be interviewed, saying only, “My story is very boring. Mostly about hair loss.”

When I tell him I was wondering if he was feeling okay after repeatedly reading “Murphy declined comment,”



A Trump piñata, above, and its Rubio-style ankle-boots, at right



he admits, “Yeah, it almost broke my jaw saying it.”

Though we’ve never been close, it was good to see my establishmentarian acquaintance again. The word gets his Irish up. “I’m not an establishmentarian,” he barks. “You think I really want the guys in polyester suits in Springfield, Virginia, running the f—ing country? . . . I’m an iconoclast, but I am an elitist—with incredibly popular taste.”

No sense in giving the country over to total amateurs, as we now seem poised to do, Murphy implies. After all, when you need someone to fix your plumbing, you call a plumber—not a reality-show star whose only real accomplishment is “teaching Gary Busey to work the snow-cone machine [on *Celebrity Apprentice*].” If we need someone to fix the country, perhaps we should subject these applicants to at least the same expertise standards we apply to the Roto-Rooter man.

Despite the roster of blue-chip establishment Republicans he’s helped elect, it’s hard for me to think of Murphy as pure establishment, whatever that shape-shifting word has come to mean. The first time I met him was exactly 20 years ago. His Lamar! campaign had cratered, and he’d recently left the Bob Dole campaign, which he’d briefly joined before departing over creative differences with the suits. Unaffiliated at the moment, he and his then-partner Don Sipple had decided to hold an “It’s Over” election watch party—in the very same Jefferson Hotel suite where rival consultant and onetime Bill Clinton consigliere Dick Morris had been caught romancing a call-girl friend. Morris allegedly sang “Popeye the Sailor Man” while prancing around in his underwear, and barked like a dog on all fours. As we watched Bob Dole circle the drain that night, the room still smelled of lust and humiliation.

Seven years later, I found myself in the middle of another Murphy caper, this time as he was helping make Arnold Schwarzenegger the unlikely governor of California in a recall election. As women came out of the woodwork at nearly every campaign stop, alleging Arnold had groped them, Murphistopheles was skillfully distracting the short-attention-span media. And not just with the beer cooler they kept on the press bus. At a stop at the Orange County Fairgrounds, Arnold intoned in his thick Arnold-accent, “Let me show you what we are going to do to de cahhhh tax when we get to Sacramento.” Arnold then pointed to a decrepit Oldsmobile in a nearby empty lot, with “Car Tax” inscribed on it. A crane right next to the car crushed it with a wrecking ball. Murphy wasn’t totally satisfied with the

stunt—he’d wanted to blow the car up. But after consulting with Arnold’s pyro people, he decided not to risk setting voters on fire.

Times change. Nowadays, of course, Republican candidates and voters seem to want to set just about everything on fire. Including their own hair and establishment-totems like Murphy. Especially after CNN wrongly stated that he made \$14 million. “It puts me in the box of ‘No, I’m not a pig-f—er.’ Which is very irritating,” Murphy says. “But I get it. We lost. So I get pissed on for a while.”

Still, like Jeb himself, Murphy has zero interest in changing who he is, or apologizing for raising gobs of money to try to put over an “establishment” candidate, one whom he still salutes for not pandering to fevered mouth-breathers who fault Jeb for not speaking the lingua franca of this election (which is now so debased, it has recently sunk to the level of dick jokes). Bush was incapable, Murphy says, of coming up with lines about “electrifying the border” or “cutting the index finger off of every Muslim-American so they can never reach a trigger. He would never do that. If Trump turns out to be the answer, I’m incredibly proud that Jeb Bush did not want to be any part of the vile question.”

The campaign, he admits, was rocked by Trump’s “low-energy” label, which stuck and hurt Bush. It’s kind of rich, suggests Murphy, since Jeb was a famous workaholic as governor. “If Trump kept up Jeb’s schedule for one day, he’d be in the hospital.” Trump’s low-energy charge, Murphy says, was “code for ‘Jeb’s not furious at anybody.’ He doesn’t open a rally with ‘I want everybody to write down the name of any Mexican they know and put it in a bin because they are going to pay.’ It was all a code word for ‘civilized.’ Jeb was the anti-Trump in a Trump year. But being the anti-Trump is a huge badge of f—ing honor. I think you get that tattooed on your forehead: ‘I’m the anti-Trump.’ People will be congratulating him on that the rest of his life.”

Trump, if you haven’t gathered, irritates Murphy. And no matter how much Trump surges, Murphy’s in no danger of “learning German” and pulling a Chris “von Papen” Christie: “I’d rather cut my arm off than vote for that jerk.” But what especially irks him are critics (“the bumper sticker glue” crowd he calls them, as

No sense in giving the country over to total amateurs, as we now seem poised to do, Murphy implies. After all, when you need someone to fix your plumbing, you call a plumber—not a reality-show star whose only real accomplishment is ‘teaching Gary Busey to work the snow-cone machine [on *Celebrity Apprentice*].’

in outsiders who second-guess your campaign right down to the kind of glue used on the bumper stickers) acting as though it were Right to Rise's duty to take out Trump.

Not only was Jeb taking swings at Trump last fall, back when the likes of Cruz and Rubio were gingerly padding around him, seemingly auditioning to be coat-check boys at one of Trump's tremendous, amazing properties. But according to Right to Rise's numbers, the super-PAC spent nearly 15 percent of their TV advertising on anti-Trump ads.

Yes, they went after others, including and especially Rubio, just as hard if not harder, spending 33.4 percent of their TV advertising on "other candidate contrast ads." But, Murphy reasons, even if they had successfully taken down Trump, Jeb wasn't about to get Trump's voters anyway. In essence, Murphy would have been using hard-won donor money to clear the field for competitors who stood a much better chance of picking off Jeb's voters (Rubio), as well as Trump's (Cruz).

Not to mention, nobody has figured out the secret sauce for taking down Trump. Several deep-pocketed PACs have thus far not managed to. Even Trump seems unable to stop Trump, though it sometimes feels as though he's trying harder than anyone. It's not your everyday candidate who can, in the space of two weeks, still sit atop the polls after picking up endorsements from both Louis Farrakhan and David Duke, after retweeting a Mussolini quote, after dismissing with the wave of a hand a charge that his campaign manager assaulted a young woman reporter, and after offering to pay the legal fees of a supporter caught on-camera sucker-punching a protester (whom the supporter later suggested might need to be "killed").

It especially enrages Murphy that the Beltway crowd has been so protective of Rubio, "having a breakdown as their precious helicopter-mom dreams are evaporating." Yes, Right to Rise smacked the silly out of Rubio repeatedly. Murphy's personal favorite was a web ad that reworked Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Are Made For Walking" as "These Boots Are Made for Flipping," featuring a Marco character in his trademark lady-boots, dancing fast, as the ad hits him on everything from immigration flip-flops to his absentee Senate record.

Murphy adds that he donated money himself to Rubio's Senate campaign and likes him personally. But for president? "Marco's just not ready." Even if his Last Establishment Man Standing strategy failed for Jeb,

Murphy stresses it wasn't his job to help elect Rubio over Trump. "We're not the RNC. We're not the party cop," Murphy thunders. "If our donors wanted to help Marco Rubio, they'd have given to him instead of us."

Many in Jeb World viewed it as a betrayal that Rubio, Bush's former protégé whom they regarded as a young man in a hurry, jumped in. "Our problem was too many regular Republicans ran," says Murphy. "And Marco ran, which was a problem, because we spent a lot of energy fighting Marco, and Marco spent a lot of energy fighting us. When the better thing to do would have been to unite our army and go fight Trump and Cruz. But that wasn't the situation we found ourselves in. These Marco guys always say, 'Why the hell didn't you spend a hundred mil-

lion dollars attacking Trump and helping us?' And I was like, 'Why did you not? How about you don't f—ing run?' . . . Loyalty is not a small thing. I'm an old Irish pol. No loyalty is owed, if no loyalty was given."

As for Cruz, Murphy does not TrusTed and has no plans to fall in line with the man shaping up to be the Establishment's hold-your-nose-and-kiss-your-sister Trump alternative: "I think he's cynical, totally cynical. . . . I don't think he could win a general election, so he'll be wiped out. It's a choice between Trump, who is terrible for the country, and Cruz, who is terrible for the party. He's too smart for

his act . . . and he's probably pissed that a bigger con man showed up."

Murphy does speak well of John Kasich, his choice of the leftovers. "I like Kasich a lot. He's the only grown-up running." He wishes Kasich well, as he labors to stay above the Friars Club roast, to be substantive and constructively positive, to offer people hope. But Kasich, Murphy adds, has an impossibly tall order this year: "He's trying to start an opera club at a tractor pull."

To put some reverse-English on matters, I talk to an old friend and profile subject, Mr. Dirty Tricks himself, Roger Stone. Stone, in some ways, is Murphy's antipode this cycle. A longtime Trump adviser, consultant, and henchman, Stone loudly and flamboyantly severed formal ties with Trump last August, but the two remain in regular contact.

When I suggest to Stone that he and Murphy are in some ways Establishment vs. Antiestablishment evil twins, he bristles: "That's almost insulting. I'm far more effective than he is. Though he makes more money than

Even if his Last Establishment Man Standing strategy failed for Jeb, Murphy stresses it wasn't his job to help elect Rubio over Trump. 'We're not the RNC. We're not the party cop,' Murphy thunders. 'If our donors wanted to help Marco Rubio, they'd have given to him instead of us.'

I do. The fees Murphy takes out of this stuff? The guy should be wearing a mask.”

Though Stone has labored as a conservative consultant/bomb-thrower for decades, he’s never worked against Murphy, though they both came out of the same milieu. “I like Murphy. He’s very mischievous. Very funny. He has no problem puncturing the conventional wisdom. He has that Irish twinkle in his eye,” Stone says generously, as he unsheaths his shiv. “But like everybody in this business, he completely miscalculated this cycle. I’m not willing to say paid advertising doesn’t work, but it doesn’t seem to work vis-à-vis Trump.”

Stone says that though Murphy is a decade-and-a-half younger, “he’s more of a dinosaur than I am. I’ve moved on to new media, he’s still stuck on network television.” I point out that’s easy for Stone to say, since Trump gets wall-to-wall free media each night, while Stone is doing hits on professional conspiracy-theorist Alex Jones’s show. “Do you have any idea how many people see me on Alex Jones?” Stone laughs. “Millions. You can call him anything you want. I don’t care. It works. Media success in the new media.”

Trump mastered it years ago, Stone says, figuring out how to circumvent all the old channels. He gets more bang out of a tweet than the rest of the candidates get out of a paid ad or press conference. “The rules we’ve always lived by are out the window. This moment couldn’t have happened three years ago. But whether Trump is a one-off, it’s here now.” Watch, Stone says, how Trump jiu-jitsu every attack, be it super-PAC ads or journalistic scrutiny. People’s “bullshit quota is completely exhausted, they’re just not buying anything the old media is telling them.”

And for other candidates to squawk about Trump’s free media? Tough, Stone says. “They cover Trump because Trump is interesting. They didn’t cover Jeb not because he didn’t have standing, but because he was boring. Jeb was a brand name. He could’ve gotten covered if he had anything to say, which, of course, he didn’t. And he was wise to drop, because had he not, Trump was going to start talking about why those 9/11 hijackers were training in Florida, and Jeb did nothing about it. . . . The only thing worse in politics than being wrong is being boring, as Dick Nixon would say. And Murphy allowed Jeb to be exceedingly boring.”

NEWS.COM
One afternoon, Murphy and I and some of the Right to Rise crew tuck in at Greenblatt’s, the local deli and institution that has been around since Sunset Boulevard was still a dirt road, serving the likes of everyone from Bing Crosby to Bela Lugosi to Joe DiMaggio. As Murphy washes down a

pastrami Reuben with a Diet Snapple, we discuss The Anger that has seized the electorate this cycle.

I point out that I’m as down for a good populist brawl as anyone, without going so far as to support an orange-hued reality-show star with wraparound hair who uses the word “amazing” way too often. I’d like secure borders, more tightly controlled immigration, and would love to see manufacturing jobs come back as much as the next guy. But what about our own culpability in the nation’s decline? The technologies we so ravenously consume as our jobs get automated or algorithmed out of existence. We pretend as though character doesn’t count, then wonder why we get so many characters. We buy cut-rate Chinese goods at Walmart, or better still, on Amazon Prime,



Jeb Bush speaks at a Right to Rise event in Las Vegas, March 2, 2015.

so we don’t have to put down the Doritos bag and budge from our easy-chair rage-stations as our passions get serially inflamed by Sean Hannity telling us how great we are and how hard we have it. Our consumption of everything seems to be increasing—of carbs, meth, anger-stoking shoutfests—even as our producers seem to be disappearing. Maybe we have unimpressive politicians because they’re our representatives, and we’ve become grossly unimpressive ourselves.

Giving Murphy the Cliff’s Notes version of that windy speechlet, I’m essentially setting him up, as often happens in our dialogue. I do so waiting for his contrarian anti-antiestablishment salvos, as when I fish for a take on one of the clown-show Republican debates, and he emails, “Buy gold, fast.” But this time, he goes pretty earnest. For him, anyway.

He says a lot of the anger is springing from people’s fears and hard realities—the middle class not getting a

raise in a decade. Generally pessimistic older white voters see the demographic shifts and don't like it. The media are incessantly "sticking red-hot thermometers in lukewarm water and saying, 'Wow, that water's pretty hot!'" He then adds, in what you don't expect the capo of a \$118 million super-PAC who spends his days begging hedge-fund managers for dough to say: "There is the Wall Street stuff—rich guys who win either way. When things go south, they get bailed out. When things go right, they get billions. There's legit anger at that. And there should be. Income inequality stuff is real."

The weird thing, Murphy says, is even the rich guys he speaks to know it. One of them, a Right to Rise donor, gave Murphy a hop from New York back to L.A. on his brand new Gulfstream. Murphy calls it a "G-a-lot," as in, "it was bigger than a G-V." Upon deplaning, "the hedge-fund zillionaire pulls me aside, and says, 'I paid \$55 million for this, and the government gave me most of it in tax breaks. I don't know if people ask for things from Jeb. But here's what I want: Tell him to get rid of that shit.' Because even the guys in that world feel crappy about it. It was an interesting moment."

Still, Murphy adds, the problem with our current antiestablishment climate isn't that people aren't correctly identifying problems. It's that the problem-solvers they're turning to are bigger snake-oil hustlers than the ones they're turning away from. Whether it's the middle class being hollowed out or fiscal irresponsibility, "The pain is legit. But Trump is a stupid vote. Because Trump won't solve any of those things, he'll make them all worse. You're voting against your pain. You're voting to create more. You're going for a kind of witch doctor of politics who is promising things based on magic."

Let's think through Trump, Murphy says. "He doesn't understand the presidency. You don't call up the head of Mexico and say, 'Hey, I'm going to build a fabulous wall with first-class gold toilets and you're gonna pay for it.' You don't call up the head of the Ford Motor Company and say, 'You can only manufacture things in the U.S. or I'm going to unilaterally impose tariffs.' He has no understanding of presidential powers. He has no understanding of Congress. It's like putting a chimp in the driver's seat of a tractor. He's not going to plow the

field. He's going to drive the tractor into the lake. So the stakes are *high*. And having problems is not a license to vote stupid. People need the tractor to plow the damn field, now."

Murphy suspects that if Trump wins the Republican nomination, the country is "idiot-proof" enough that Hillary (who he adds "I'm not a fan of") would beat Trump. The head-to-head numbers have consistently suggested such, which is why he's long called Trump a "zombie frontrunner." But when asked what unintended

consequences he sees if Trump is elected president, he says that political consultants who handle overseas elections in sketchy places with corrupt politicians, as he himself has done on occasion, have a joke. "We like to say law, order, freedom—pick one, amigo."

More seriously, Murphy suggests, "We turn into Paraguay. Which is probably an insult to Paraguay. Trump suing the attorney general because he tried to turn off the air-conditioning in the Rayburn building. It'll turn into a bad reality show. And all the crap you see in foreign countries where the parliament members are suing each other and everything turns into a big legitimacy fight. . . . We lose everything. The brand will be destroyed."

"Then the problem becomes how are we the world's reserve currency anymore? We get away with a lot of shit because people think we have a stable system. But if your banker comes in one day wearing a diaper, speaking gibberish, you're going to pull your money out of that checking account. So that has a huge potential impact on our ability to protect our economic strength. We borrow a lot of f—ing money. Because people think the number one safest instrument in the world is the U.S. Treasury bond. And if we start making reality-show clowns in charge? Run on the American bank. You think the pissed-off steelworker in Akron has trouble now? Wait until we have a financial collapse and they take 25 percent off the dollar. He'll be serving hot dogs in an American restaurant in China."

On Super Tuesday night (the first installment), the Right to Rise crew packs HMS Bounty, a neighborhood bar on Wilshire Boulevard, to watch election returns, as civilian bystanders now instead of participants. It's one of Murphy's favorite old-school dinosaur

Murphy says Trump 'has no understanding of presidential powers. He has no understanding of Congress. It's like putting a chimp in the driver's seat of a tractor. He's not going to plow the field. He's going to drive the tractor into the lake. So the stakes are high. And having problems is not a license to vote stupid. People need the tractor to plow the damn field, now.'

haunts, dark-wood-paneled and nautical-themed, with Patsy Cline and Dean Martin and Louis Prima on the jukebox. They filmed an episode of *Mad Men* here, and it feels like nothing would need to be changed to make it a period set.

The bar sits across from what used to be the Ambassador Hotel, where Bobby Kennedy was shot. And a couple of Murphy's young crew mention that they're later heading out for Tex-Mex at El Coyote, which happens to be where Sharon Tate ate her last meal before getting slaughtered by the Manson Family. I mention to Murphy that between these and the Biggie Smalls assassination site, right outside his office window, death seems to be stalking these establishmentarians. "We call this 'The Voyage of the Damned Party,'" he cracks, as a waitress trips over my reporting bag, nearly becoming yet another casualty.

As we knock back drinks, passing shared plates of fried everything, we watch the returns come in. It's Trump's night yet again, as he bags seven more states. Cruz nabs three. Rubio, already doing the dead man's float, only pulls lonely 17-delegate Minnesota. "Just clap," sneers David Johnson (DJ), still nursing a Rubio grudge, as he lifts his old boss's desperate quip from the campaign trail, when Jeb hit an applause line and there was none to be heard. DJ describes himself as a "senior adviser to Mike Murphy—I tell him he's a handsome man." DJ is a Jeb loyalist and old Florida hand who is one of Murphy's favorites. Murphy says DJ will never be famous, "but he makes the army run." With DJ's long memory and grudge-holding capabilities, Murphy adds, "He could've been the mayor of Cleveland in 1931."

Murphy himself isn't much of a drinker anymore, but when he orders a Blue Moon, DJ looks as though Murphy had just tried on a pair of lady-boots. "Marco beer," DJ grimaces. "Lots of foam."

With just half a Marco beer in him, Murphy starts waxing philosophic. The game isn't as much fun as it used to be. Everything is so postmodern and meta that "nothing means anything, because everything is what the scam is. I've always wanted to run a campaign where the bumper sticker is 'We don't have a bumper sticker.' The press would eat it up." It's all process and horse race—who cares what anyone stands for—so long as you're up and not down. So many simpleton reporters—whose depth of knowledge extends to whatever they read in the *Real Clear Politics* polls average that morning. Fly-by-night pollsters feeding the media, which is creating news so that they can report on it. A never-ending, sausage-making, feedback

loop. Plus, Right to Rise got dumped-on every single day. And to top it all off, Murphy's mom died right in the middle of the cycle. Keeled over from a cerebral hemorrhage after leaving the beauty parlor. He was notified while in New York, as rich guys were straightening him out on bumper sticker glue. The docs said she had 48 hours, and he got back home to Michigan in time for a semi-conscious hand-squeeze from the woman who brought him into this world, before she slipped away. Even for a happy warrior like him, the year was a bit of a grind.

Murphy watches Trump get that much closer to walking off with his party, and maybe even his country if nobody takes Trump out at an open convention. He refuses to use the words "brokered convention," since "there

really aren't many brokers anymore besides Mark Levin." Murphy's certainly up for one, as he is sick of our sanitized infomercial conventions anyway. Being a student of political history, he pines for the days when there were no primaries. "You'd just pack a quart of liquor, a revolver, and go to the convention."

I suggest to Murphy that many of these things he's decrying have been the tricks of his trade. He's like a magician denouncing the false-bottomed top hat. "I don't mind

technique," he says. "I can be shameless. I have a long career at this. But when everything is a short con, then there's never another short con. Because you need trust, and you've destroyed it."

He tells me that when he was still a young buck, his mother had a friend who was married to a Leo Burnett ad man—"you know, Don Draper, basically." Murphy showed him an early ad he'd cut, a clever but unnecessarily negative one. "And he said, 'It's funny,'" Murphy recalls. "But then he added, 'Let me tell you, as an ad guy, I work for McDonald's. And every day, we hate Burger King. We hate those sonsofbitches. And we'd love to run an ad that says: *Here's Burger King, it's full of worms.* But then Burger King would run: *McDonald's hamburgers will give you cancer.* And at the end of it, we've destroyed hamburgers. We would f— the category.'"

Republican party politics and cancer worm-burgers—not so different, says Murphy. "I don't mind a good fight on an issue. I like that stuff. I don't mind negative ads. But when the fighting is over meaningless stuff, like 'you're-low-energy-because-you-use-big-words-and-don't-hate-anybody-and-I-wear-a-red-hat-that-says-Make-America-Great-Again-because-I-played-a-business-guy-on-TV'? We cheapen the category to the point where we're



A box of leftover Trump-piñata heads

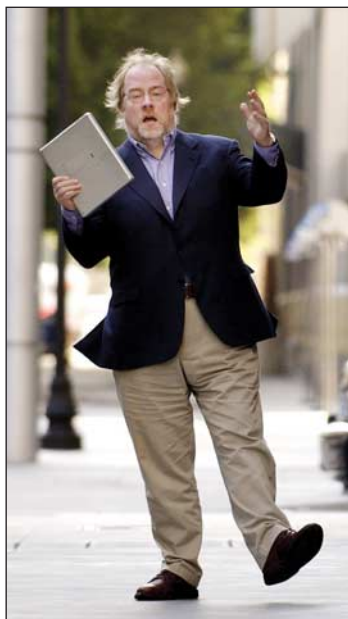
getting an outcome that is actually a bit dangerous.”

The next morning, at his well-appointed but unostentatious Hancock Park home, Murphy’s less melancholy. He shows me his study-full of curios, his Soviet propaganda pieces and old vaudeville playbills, a telephone from the Nixon White House and Bob Hope’s library chair (picked up at an estate sale) and the banjo that he’s teaching himself to play. He shows me his 2-year-old daughter and his lovely wife Tiffany Daniel, a fellow Preston Sturges fanatic who was a producer in the business but who says that she’s “now in the business of toddlers.” The longtime bachelor married her in 2011, his reward, he suggests, for a lifetime of being “very picky.”

Murphy seems to have a happy life away from politics, which might explain why he disappears for years at a time in between high-profile races. He’s a man of varied and many enthusiasms: from gyroplanes to photography to blues piano to taking two-week voyages on no-frills transpacific container ships where he rises with the sun and bangs out scripts on deck, then puts his laptop down and watches ice volcanoes go by.

When friends send notes checking up on him, making sure he’s okay after all the recent sour press, he thanks them for their concern, but tells them he’s quite all right. “My revenge is living well,” he says. Next, “I want to go get on a freighter and go through the Panama Canal. All I’ve ever wanted in my life is freedom and access. I like being backstage and watching the weird, human drama of all of these strange personalities that politics attracts.”

We get to talking about some of these strange birds. And the “E” word comes up again—this mythic Establishment whose slats everyone keeps kicking in. Murphy would like to know which establishment we’re talking about. There are so many, often with competing interests. He starts ticking them off: The Beltway, conservative media establishment who were mostly for Rubio. The Republican finance establishment of New York/Dallas who were mostly for Jeb. The Christian conservative establishment, largely pulling for Cruz and Ben Carson. The cable-news business establishment who are, whatever they insist, for Trump, since Trump equals ratings. Then there’s the K Street establishment—they’re for whoever wins.



Murphy mugs for photographers after meeting with California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, 2004.

But just as notable, he points out, is the antiestablishment establishment. The professional stokers of anger and discontent, those who settle, as a way of life, on unsettledness. “Like, Antiestablishment Inc.,” Murphy says. “You can find them at 123 Establishment Lane, Des Moines, Iowa. Often, they’re involved with the postage meter or credit card machine somewhere for small-dollar donations.” He cites the old Eric Hoffer maxim: Every great cause begins as a movement, becomes a business, and eventually degenerates into a racket.

Take, for instance, he says, the Tea Party—“a racket, though it’s supposed to be a nonracket,” full of faux four-

star generals who say, “‘You’ve got to pay me because . . . I represent the Nebraska sub-Army 14 of the Tea Party,’ and there’d be like four or five guys arguing over who’s in charge of it.” It reminds Murphy of when he used to do referendum campaigns in Dade County. “There’d always be these charming old Cubans who’d come in and say, ‘Colonel Escobar is willing to endorse on his radio show, but he requires certain considerations. One million dollars.’”

“And we’d be like, ‘Thirty-five hundred dollars cash and lunch today.’”

“‘We agree!’”

Murphy concedes there are lots of voters who “subscribe to a loose set of principles that D.C.’s broken. They’re tired of the establishment. Tired of people in the racket.” But there’s a racket of people sending them letters asking for money. “The poor old lady sends her \$25 to defeat Nancy Pelosi, and \$22 of

it goes to ‘fundraising costs.’”

All these rackets create a grievance industry. “And you can’t have grievance politics,” cautions Murphy, “without endless whining. I think if you got the Founding Fathers or the first hundred guys killed at Anzio Beach, brought them back to life, and said, ‘What do you think of all this?’ [they’d say], ‘What a bunch of whiners. Have you ever had 400 Germans comin’ at ya? Put on a red hat and say Make America Great Again? What have you done, pal?’”

But ever the happy warrior, Murphy tries to take a sanguine view. “If we have real, creative destruction here with Trump, and we have Armageddon or worse, out of the ruins will come new successes. New movements. And eventually, new rackets.”

“And I’ll be in on them,” Murphy says with a half-smile. “I admit it, I’m a racketeer.”

NEWS.COM



A Park Called Zion



BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

“O h wow,” a voice up ahead on the trail called, “look at that. A perfect view of the Altar of Sacrifice.”

Well, the park is called Zion. So there is logic behind the biblical names of its most imposing and impressive features. In addition to the Altar of Sacrifice, there are the Three Patriarchs—Abraham Peak, Isaac Peak, and Jacob Peak. Abraham Peak is the tallest at 6,890 feet. Then there is the Great White Throne, Angels Landing, and more—until a man begins to feel like he has been transported back into one of those epic films starring Charlton Heston.

Geoffrey Norman, a writer in Vermont, is a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

The naming was done by the early Mormon settlers who came to farm this part of Utah and who considered the valley of the Virgin River a place of safety. Before the coming of the Mormons in the mid-19th century, this had been the country of the Southern Paiute Indians. Their name for it was Mukuntuweap; they considered it a place of spirits and did not stay here at night.

The name given by the Mormons—Zion—suggested both an end to their wandering and a place of refuge. And, one thinks, something more. The features of this park are awesome, in the oldest and truest sense of the word. Gaze on them and, if your sensibilities are of a certain kind, you will see the hand of God.

At a more prosaic level you will marvel at the park's features as masterpieces of geology—the work of time and water and wind on rock. The rock is mostly desert sandstone that's been cut by wind, polished by water, and

NEWS.COM



assuming all manner of shapes, most of them imposing, making one feel small and insignificant.

The ceaseless carving by the Virgin River and lesser streams has left canyons, many of them easily accessible. On the winter day I walked the Emerald Pools Trail, I stopped to talk with a man in a wheelchair who was coming out. He ran out of superlatives when describing what he had seen and the fact that he was able to experience it, thanks to the well-maintained and intermittently hard-surfaced trail.

On further, much further, there is another kind of trail, one that is as much water as dry land. As you go deeper into the canyon, it begins to squeeze down on you, with huge and formidable rock buttresses on each side, sometimes less than 30 feet apart. You experience, on this walk, that same wonderful feeling of puny insignificance that comes over you on a summer night when you look up into a sky so full of stars that there are too many to count.

This trail, Angels Landing, is one of Zion's signature hikes. It is not easy physically, and it can be daunting given the amount of what mountain climbers call "exposure." There are places where you feel. . . well, *exposed*. You think about falling because you are out there, on a narrow ledge, and for a long way below you, there is nothing but air. At some points, the Park Service has installed handrails for protection, and you find yourself grateful for the kindness. The trail follows a narrow sort of spine up a face of rock, up some 1,500 feet to a sort of platform where the views are majestic and worth both the walk and the nerves.

There are many other trails of varying length and difficulty. And there is the backcountry where, with the proper permits and planning, you can camp and stay for a while. But the planning part is important. There is the question of water, always. Dehydration, especially in the summer, is a constant risk. This is, after all, the high desert.

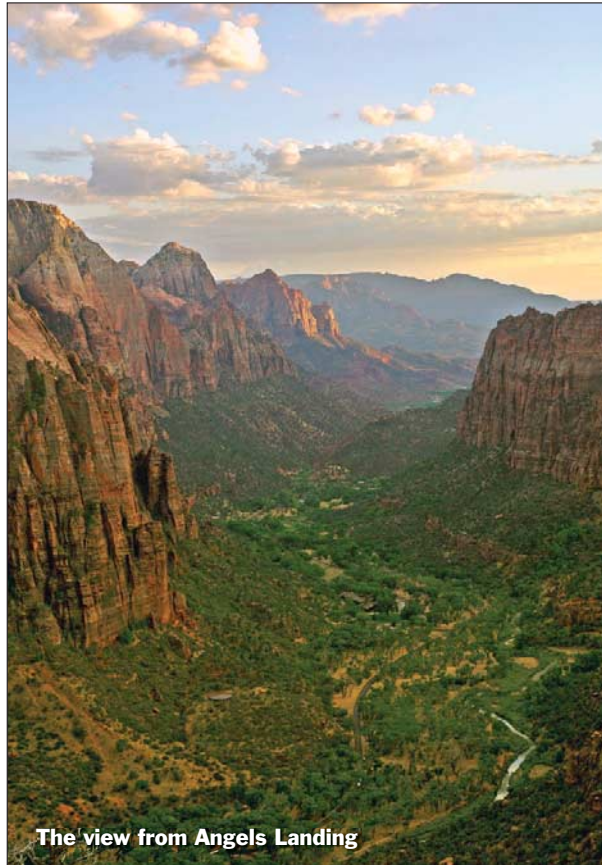
And then there is the danger of water in abundance. The canyons are narrow and the streams are shallow, and sudden heavy rains, even some distance away, can bring on flash flooding. Seven people perished last September when Keyhole Canyon flooded.

But Zion is, for all that, a very agreeable park. It is possible to take in much of its formidable beauty from the road, though it would be a shame to stay in one's car. My wheelchair acquaintance made it up a trail, after all, with no complaints. And when you get out, you do not have to go far before you feel that liberating sense of being alone in big, big country.

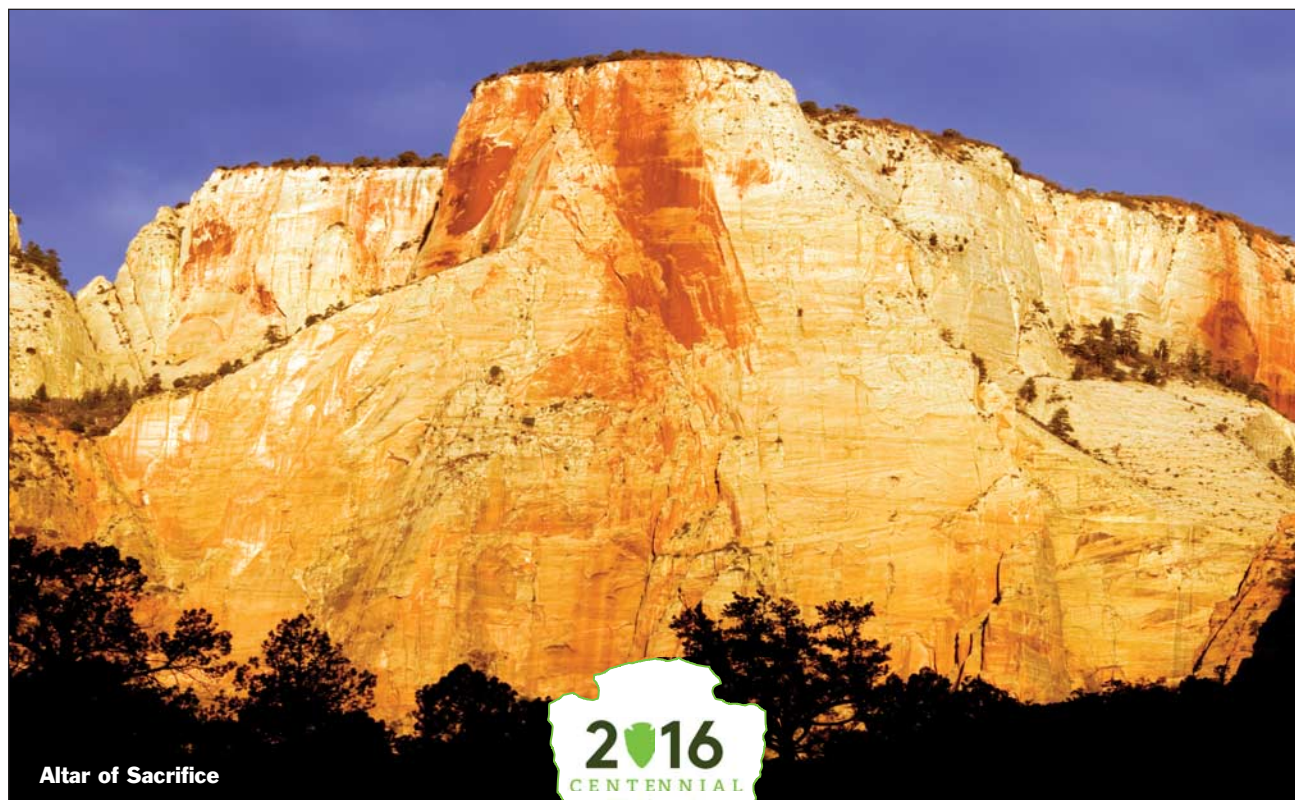
The bigness includes a number of sheer faces that draw rock climbers. There are hundreds of climbs, some of them extending upwards more than 2,000 feet, so the "rock jocks" come from all over. The park's 230 square miles include a lot of country that is good for both horses and mountain bikes. It is, as well, a feast for photographers, with the light on those rock faces bringing up colors you have no name for and plenty of wildlife to capture with a lens.

On my most recent visit I came around a bend in the trail and found myself facing a buck mule deer. So I began paying attention, walking more slowly and checking the ground. A little further up the trail I found tracks that could not have been made by anything but a mountain lion. They didn't look especially fresh but I could feel my internal threat level rising a notch or two. I hoped to see that cat but it didn't happen. But I got some good pictures of the deer and of the great rock faces and formations that bracket the trail. Zion is a user-friendly park that way. Which is why it's among the ten most visited National Parks.

For all that there is to do, however, it is what there is to *see* that makes Zion so indelible. It's no coincidence that it came to be a park after it had been painted by an artist named Frederick S. Dellenbaugh in 1903. Dellenbaugh was intoxicated by Zion Canyon, and



The view from Angels Landing



Altar of Sacrifice

a series of his paintings created a stir when they were exhibited at the World's Fair in St. Louis the following year.

In *Scribner's Magazine*, Dellenbaugh wrote of Zion, "One hardly knows just how to think of it. Never before has such a naked mountain of rock entered into our minds. Without a shred of disguise its transcendent form rises pre-eminent. There is almost nothing to compare to it. Niagara has the beauty of energy; the Grand Canyon, of immensity; the Yellowstone, of singularity; the Yosemite, of altitude; the ocean, of power; this Great Temple, of eternity."

Again, the theological note—inescapable, perhaps.

The attention stirred by Dellenbaugh led, a few years later, to President William Howard Taft's designation of the area as Mukuntuweap National Monument. Which, of course, led to indignant protests from people in the area accustomed to the name "Zion" and from Mormons who, by then, had appropriated, in spirit, this land that Brigham Young had declared, when he visited in 1870, to be "not Zion." Young was looking for good farmland. Cotton was one of the Mormon crops, and this was no country for cotton.

Still, the name Zion seemed to stick in spite of Young, and in 1918, the acting director of the National Park Service changed the name to Zion National Monument.

All of which seems monumentally unimportant when

you are actually there. If it is to be "Zion," then that certainly fits. It is a place that leaves one with a feeling of breathless reverence, that makes one aware, in an immediate and almost tactile way, of the great forces of time and geology. It is just rock. But what magnificent rock.

On my winter visit, with the sun going down and business awaiting me in Las Vegas, three hours away, I took one last trail. I climbed for a while and then followed a ledge. There was enough exposure in spots that some railings had been installed for protection. From my ledge, I could see a line of formidable rock, almost flat, with the sun beginning to set behind it and causing it almost to glow.

There was one hard white slab of this rock with a noticeable section looking like it had been smeared red.

This was when I heard the voice call out about the great view of the Altar of Sacrifice.

I stayed in that spot for 15 minutes or so taking pictures and recalling, imperfectly, the lines from the Book:

An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.

Zion National Park is a place of play, certainly, and one of the park system's jewels. But you don't have to work very hard to imagine it—even to believe it—a holy place. ♦

RUSSELL BURDEN / GETTY IMAGES



'Sunday Morning' by Eastman Johnson (1866)

Get Out the Word

The biblical proportions of the American Bible Society. BY THOMAS S. KIDD

Everyone except the most rigid secularists would agree that the Bible has been the most influential book in American history. The American Bible Society (ABS), founded in 1816, has been the most important agency in putting Bibles into Americans' hands. Tracking the number of Bibles the ABS has distributed is like counting the number of hamburgers

Thomas S. Kidd, distinguished professor of history at Baylor, is the author, most recently, of George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father.

The Bible Cause
A History of the American Bible Society
by John Fea
Oxford, 384 pp., \$29.95

McDonald's has sold; in the 1990s, the burger giant just stopped counting how many "billions" had been served. It is not trite to note the comparable scale of distribution between the ABS and McDonald's: The ABS and similar Bible agencies have operated on an assumption that mass delivery of the holy book was, humanly speaking, an end unto itself. The Bible held

the message of salvation through Jesus Christ and it was the foundation of Western "Judeo-Christian" civilization. The best thing was to distribute God's Word, and let God do the rest.

John Fea, a respected historian at Messiah College, was commissioned by ABS officials to write *The Bible Cause* for the ABS's 200th anniversary. Fea says that he only agreed to do this with assurances of "full academic freedom," and his excellent book shows every sign that Fea was able to operate unfettered. For most of its history, the ABS distributed Bibles "without note or comment," but Fea presents

GETTY IMAGES

the organization as both an “American Bible Society” and an “American Bible Society.” It had both a religious and a national mission. Fea is clearly more comfortable with Bible distribution than the ways in which the ABS has sought to form an American Christian nation or to export that national culture around the globe.

The ABS was one of the largest and most successful of the great benevolent societies of the antebellum period, and its continued (though not unalloyed) prosperity through the present day makes it an ideal case study. Some readers with no direct connection to the ABS might ask why they should read the history of a single Christian organization. I would challenge the premise of the question: Legions of people in America and around the world have been touched by the ABS in ways they do not realize. Fea helped me see how deeply my own family’s Bible-owning and reading was shaped by ABS imprints. Moreover, focusing on one denomination or agency over a long period of time illuminates broader trends in American religion. The ABS shaped American religion and publishing; but external forces, from war to immigration, also influenced the society. Some readers may find the details of ABS policy and governance a bit overwhelming, but the massive significance of the ABS justifies what Fea has written.

The ABS’s founders included some of the most devout, if lesser-known, Founding Fathers, such as Elias Boudinot and John Jay. The creators of the ABS were Christians and “nationalists,” not in a jingoistic sense, but in their conviction that antebellum America needed a coherent Christian republican culture in order to thrive. The Bible was the key, not only to salvation, but also to cultivating a virtuous society and “national feeling.” As a republic, America depended upon a morally sound citizenry; to the ABS, most people became ethically responsible when God used the precepts of the Bible to change their hearts. The ABS hoped that these blessings would flow not only to literate whites but also to Afri-

can Americans and Native Americans.

The ABS’s determination to spread the King James Bible—the paradigmatic Bible of the English-speaking world since the 1600s—without notes or commentary sprang from a deeply Protestant sensibility. One of the surprises that Fea delivers is how often the ABS clashed with Roman Catholics, not just implicitly or theologically, but in open conflict. As the tide of Catholic immigrants from Europe rose in the mid-19th century, putting unadorned Bibles in their hands became a way to save them (according to the ABS) from the clutches of Rome. Celebratory accounts in ABS publications told of Catholic immigrants reading the vernacular Bible for the first time and realizing that the Roman Catholic church had obscured the message of salvation through faith in Christ alone.

Catholic clergy saw what the Protestant Bible distributors were doing. Priests in America, as well as in Catholic-majority countries, instructed parishioners to refuse, or even to burn, the ABS’s King James Bibles. In one Mexican town, priests reportedly denounced the King James Version as “the book of the devil.” Although ABS officials played up such stories for publicity, successive popes in the 1840s cautioned Catholics against the Bible distributors. Pius IX warned against the practice of individual Bible study; only the “holy mother church,” he noted, had “received the commission from Christ ... to decide upon the true sense and interpretation of the Sacred Writing.” Catholic officials also balked at the teaching of the King James Version in public schools, helping to bolster the creation of America’s parochial school system. Relations between Catholics and the ABS only began to thaw in the 1960s, due to ecumenical trends on both sides.

Times of war focused the ABS’s efforts on getting the Scriptures into the hands of American soldiers. Massive troop mobilizations during the Civil War and both the world wars precipitated ambitious Bible distribution efforts. Even the federal government got in on the act. During World

War II, Congress provided funds for 1.2 million King James New Testaments, as well as hundreds of thousands of Scripture texts appropriate for Jewish or Catholic soldiers, to go out in the Army. The ABS, perhaps deemed too Protestant for this effort, only provided a template for these Army New Testaments, but they remained the exclusive supplier of Bibles to the Navy and Marines.

The most fascinating part of Fea’s account is the changing theological allegiance of the ABS over the past 75 years. At its inception, and for a century afterwards, the American Bible Society was basically an “evangelical benevolent society in an evangelical culture.” But when religious conflicts of the 1910s and ’20s split Protestants into fundamentalists (proto-evangelicals) and modernists, the ABS largely aligned with the modernist leaders of the mainline denominations. Given the prevalence of Eisenhower-esque American civil religion, and the continuing financial and cultural sway of the mainline churches, this alignment made sense: After World War II, the ABS’s dissemination of Scripture was grounded in the quest for a just and humane world order, championed more generically by the United Nations and the World Council of Churches.

The emblematic new Bible in the mid-20th century was the Revised Standard Version. This aspiring replacement for the King James Version reflected ABS translators’ commitment to “dynamic equivalence,” or capturing the sense of a passage in the original language, rather than trying to translate sentences word-for-word. Most notoriously to evangelical critics, the RSV declined to translate the Hebrew word for “young woman” as “virgin” in Isaiah chapter 7. (The King James Version had rendered it “a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”) The ABS team was not persuaded by the idea that the passage was a prophecy about Jesus as the Messiah. For evangelicals, modernist monkeying with the text of the English Bible was anathema. Many evangelicals kept their distance from the Revised Standard Version, from successors

like the Good News Translation, and from the ABS in general.

In spite of its modernist tendencies, Fea shows that, by the 1970s, the ABS began to rein in its most liberal elements in order to keep from utterly alienating evangelical constituents. This set the stage for a recent return by the ABS to its evangelical roots. In one sense, this shift was not surprising, given that the mission of the ABS—Bible distribution—always had evangelistic motivations that were out of joint with the liberal leadership of the mainline denominations. Many of those mainline leaders determined decades ago that seeking “conversions,” especially among non-Christians, was coercive and imperialistic. But I was surprised to find how overtly ABS leaders discussed the ramifications of the rise of evangelical conservatism in the 1980s and of the massive decline of the mainline denominations.

As the ABS observes its 200th birthday, it has become more clearly aligned with a broadly defined evangelicalism than it has been for a century. That adjustment has been both self-conscious and controversial among the ABS leadership. ABS leaders have also become concerned that the agency has, for too long, focused simply on shipping as many Bibles as it can. Touting the ABS’s own “billions and billions served,” as it were, is no longer sufficient: Especially in America, the Bible remains pervasively owned, but little read, except among a devout minority. With the advent of the Internet and smartphones, access to the Scriptures in physical or electronic form is no longer an issue for much of the world’s population. The problem is focusing a prospective reader’s attention (or what the ABS calls “engagement”) on the Word of God.

Christians have no doubt that the Bible is “living and active,” as the Book of Hebrews puts it. But millions of dust-covered Bibles on American bookshelves don’t do much to enliven souls or even to preserve an American national culture. Addressing that neglect of the Bible may be the greatest challenge the American Bible Society has ever faced. ♦

BCA

Society’s Child

The strange, posthumous career of Capt. John Birch.

BY GABRIEL SCHOENFELD

Everything has a history and a pre-history, and that includes Donald Trump and his angry hordes. Trump is by no means the first American tycoon to stir up fears and resentments and attempt to ride a populist wave. One of his notable predecessors, mostly forgotten today, is Robert Welch.

Born in the last year of the 19th century, Welch built his fortune in the confectionery trade. His company came up with the Sugar Daddy and then, after a slide into bankruptcy, returned successfully with Sugar Babies and Junior Mints. Candy made Welch fabulously wealthy; but his forays into electoral politics—including a run in 1950 for lieutenant governor of Massachusetts—went nowhere. Welch found another vehicle to advance his agenda, which in its essentials amounted to anti-communism on steroids.

That vehicle was the John Birch Society, which Welch established in 1958. By that juncture, the embers of the McCarthy era had already begun to cool. The demagogic senator from Wisconsin had died the previous year, not long after discrediting himself by recklessly lodging unfounded accusations. But the John Birch Society, picking up where McCarthy left off, was nonetheless extraordinarily successful. At its peak, at the close of the 1950s, it boasted 100,000 members—mostly white suburbanites—managed by a paid staff of 200, with 60 regional coordinators running chapters across the United States, making it the largest

John Birch

A Life

by Terry Lutz

Oxford, 317 pp., \$29.95

conservative grassroots organization in the country.

The animating purpose of the society was stopping the Communist conspiracy that Welch saw as rapidly making terrifying inroads at home and abroad. Indeed, in the period between 1958 and 1961, Welch estimated that Communist infiltration of our country had increased from an earlier range of 20 to 40 percent to 50 to 70 percent. What exactly those percentages meant was never made clear, for this was material from the far fringe, which came coupled with vigorous opposition to the nascent civil rights movement. The general public perceived the John Birch Society as crackpot as well as racist and antisemitic, accusations which Welch abjured, maintaining that “many of our finest chapter leaders are Jewish and we are very proud of our small but growing number of Negro members.”

It did not help the society’s standing when, in 1960, it emerged that Welch, behind the scenes, was engaged in a full-bore attack on Dwight D. Eisenhower, charging the president with being “a dedicated conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy.” America’s great wartime general, he claimed, was “knowingly accepting and abiding by Communist orders, and consciously serving the Communist conspiracy, for all his adult life.” John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and George C. Marshall were also said to be in on the plot. All of this, explained Welch, was based upon “an accumulation of detailed

Gabriel Schoenfeld, a senior adviser to the Mitt Romney for President campaign in 2012, is the author of Necessary Secrets: National Security, the Media, and the Rule of Law.

evidence so extensive and so palpable that it seems to me to put this conviction beyond any reasonable doubt.”

In *John Birch: A Life*, Terry Lautz offers a fascinating reconstruction of the rise and fall of Welch’s organization—which remains with us today, shrunk to dust from its heyday and ideologically perched between the Tea Party and the Libertarians, with an extra touch of paranoia tossed in. (Ron Paul, the eccentric former congressman and father of Senator Rand Paul, was the keynote speaker at the John Birch Society’s 50th anniversary dinner in 2008.) Beyond bringing us back to a chapter of irrationalism in our past, Lautz’s equally interesting contribution is to rescue John Birch, the man, from obscurity and from the society that pirated his name.

John Birch was born in 1918 in India, to missionary parents. Disillusioned with the hardships and contradictions of their assignment, they returned to the United States, settling in New Jersey, where they operated a fruit orchard. The young John Birch embraced the Baptist faith of his parents with fervor. Following college at Mercer University, where he majored in English and Christianity, Birch fell under the influence of the Billy Graham of his day, the charismatic evangelist J. Franklin Norris. Norris’s worldwide missionary works had their pull: “I feel that God has laid his Hand on me and called me to China” is what Birch told his mentor. In 1939, at the age of 22, he set off for war-torn China to preach the Gospel.

Arriving in Shanghai, Birch threw himself into the study of Chinese, writing home that “there is war, starvation, disease, sin, idolatry, superstition, suffering and death on every side, but our wonderful Savior keeps saving souls, answering prayers, and giving joy in the midst of sorrow.” Before long, Birch acquired an astonishing command of Mandarin, as well as a high level of comfort and familiarity with the ways and customs of

China. Then came the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Like millions of Americans, Birch signed up for the armed forces, which already had a presence in China.

Through a remarkable chain of circumstances, and thanks to his extraordinary agility in navigating Chinese society, Birch ended up serving as an intelligence officer under General Claire Chennault, whose Fly-



Robert Welch in foreground, portrait of Capt. John Birch in background (1966)

ing Tigers were fighting on behalf of Chiang Kai-shek. Birch’s important assignment was to create networks of combat intelligence agents who could spot Japanese planes, choose suitable targets for attack, and coordinate American military action with Chinese forces. Some of his exploits became familiar back home thanks to dispatches that appeared in J. Franklin Norris’s widely read publication, *The Fundamentalist*.

Lautz takes us through Birch’s perilous assignments, first under Chennault and then under the CIA’s predecessor organization, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). And he explores in depth what is probably the most important question surrounding John Birch: the circumstances of his death in 1945 at the age of 27. In the

conspiratorial eyes of Robert Welch, the real story of Birch’s demise—allegedly kept hidden from the American public by traitors within our government—was the root of the Communist plot to dominate the world. Relying on a careful study of documents and interviews with survivors of that distant era, Lautz offers a rather different picture, to say the least.

On his last mission in the field, Birch had encountered a Chinese Communist detachment. His judgment, which on all such previous assignments had been notably acute, on this occasion failed him, perhaps due to exhaustion. He rebuffed the demands of a Red Army major that he surrender his sidearm, and he shoved a soldier, lodging an insult at the same time. Birch was shot on the spot and his body mutilated.

It was an ugly local skirmish of the kind that was happening across China and across Asia, as the war in the Pacific was drawing to a close. At most, Birch’s death is a data point in the first phase of the hostility that was to erupt between the United States and Mao Zedong’s China; in itself, it held no large political significance. The government “cover-up” was essentially a figment of Welch’s overwrought imagination, with the allegations helped along by Birch’s surviving parents, who desperately sought greater posthumous recognition for their son’s service to the country.

Essentially, John Birch had his name hijacked and ruined by Robert Welch. Today it evokes images of right-wing kooks huddled in secret meetings worrying feverishly about imagined enemies. But Birch deserves to be remembered differently—and better—as another member of the Greatest Generation, extraordinary in an ordinary way, a devout Christian, missionary, warrior, and spy, who, like hundreds of thousands of other Americans during World War II, took great risks and sacrificed his life for his country at an age far too young. ♦

Tortured Mann

One shortened life reflects Germany's long nightmare.

BY MARK FALCOFF

Der Spiegel recently described the great German writers Thomas and Heinrich Mann and their progeny thus: “egocentric and self-deprecating, half-bound to one another, sexually irregular, the representatives of a different Germany. ... [Today] Thomas Mann’s family seems astonishingly modern.” No one lived up to those words more than Thomas Mann’s eldest son, Klaus: writer, lecturer, provocateur, world traveler, anti-Nazi militant, largely underrated during his lifetime, but lately something of a cult figure in a reunited Germany. Now comes Frederic Spotts, a retired American diplomat and distinguished man of letters in his own right (*Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* and *The Shameful Peace*), to introduce this remarkable man to American readers.

To read this book is to plunge into a world utterly unlike our own, where writers occupied almost oracular positions in European society and where the European countries major and minor were torn apart by revolutionary (or counterrevolutionary) ideologies and movements, and then rent by the Second World War and the beginnings of the Cold War. It also casts light on a United States long since disappeared. In the case of Klaus Mann, one major burden to be negotiated is the fact that, as a writer, he was always under the shadow of a famous father and uncle; the other, that his political independence and nonconformity forced him into exile at a remarkably early age.

Born in 1906 to a well-to-do family (thanks to his mother’s dowry), by

Mark Falcoff is a writer and translator in Munich and Washington.

Cursed Legacy
The Tragic Life of Klaus Mann
by Frederic Spotts
Yale, 352 pp., \$40

the time Klaus was old enough to start writing himself his father was a Nobel laureate and one of the leading figures of European literature. At his father’s dinner table he could eavesdrop on the conversations of Hermann Hesse, Bruno Walter, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Gustav Mahler, Max Liebermann, and Stefan Zweig. Inevitably he began writing as soon as possible, bursting into prominence at the age of 19 with his first novel, *Der fromme Tanz* (1926), the first openly gay novel in German literature. By 1932, at 26, he had published four plays, two additional novels, three volumes of short stories, even a precocious autobiography (*Kind dieser Zeit*), not to mention over a hundred essays and two travel books in collaboration with his sister Erika.

Cashing in on his early success and notoriety as “the precocious son of a distinguished father,” Klaus and his sister Erika went on a lecture tour of the United States, though neither could speak much English at the time. Traveling as far west as Hollywood, Mann allowed as how he liked Americans, although he found them “shockingly wholesome.” He and Erika returned to Germany by way of Hawaii, Korea, China, and the Soviet Union. The latter was on the verge of entering its long Stalinist ice age, and the writing was already on the wall for artists and intellectuals. The visit left Klaus and Erika “perplexed and saddened,” which Spotts claims (not wholly accurately) inoculated young Mann against “the blind pro-commu-

nism of many Western intellectuals in those years.”

Such notoriety at an early age invited envy and contempt by more established German intellectuals. It also created a distance between Klaus Mann and his father, whose literary and personal styles were wholly conventional. Indeed, the list of unfriendly critics reads like a *Who’s Who* of Weimar culture. There is Kurt Tucholsky’s barb, for example, that “Klaus sprained his right arm writing his hundredth publicity bulletin and will be unable to keep his speaking engagements in the weeks to come.” From early on, Spotts explains, Klaus was derided less by the Nazis and the political right (which tended to ignore him) than by the left, the Social Democrats no less than the Communists.

The rise of Hitler took Mann by surprise. He never really regarded him seriously—“not with that nose!” he wrote in *The Turning Point* (1942)—but almost immediately after the Reichstag fire he recognized the danger and departed for Paris, not returning to Germany until after World War II. For the next decade he changed countries several times: the Netherlands, France, and Czechoslovakia, whose president awarded him a passport when Germany revoked his citizenship in 1934. There were visits to the United States to lecture on the coming threat of Nazism and war, by now in an English which was becoming fluent. Indeed, after 1939, he basically ceased to write in German at all, becoming perhaps the only exile writer of his generation to master English prose.

Withal, Klaus Mann was an unhappy soul. He never pleased his father, who was often scandalized by his personal conduct and uncompromising public positions. But at the same time, almost to the end of his life, he remained dependent on parental subsidies to survive. He developed an early addiction to various drugs—Spotts produces a bewildering list of substances—which he never overcame. He was also what today would be called an Out and Proud Homosexual at a time when such conduct was illegal in most countries, including

Britain and most American states. His sex life as described here makes for sordid reading; fleeting affairs, none very long-lasting, punctuated by anonymous sexual adventures as a form of recreation and release. He had a tendency to argue with people over politics and, although he was on the right side of the issues, was probably something of a pain.

Above all, one gets the sense of endless energy, dedicated both to politics and culture in the broadest sense. After the Munich agreements, Mann quit Europe for the United States, where many were either blind to his warnings or ideologically committed to pacifism. (There are some unflattering descriptions here of Christopher Isherwood and W.H. Auden, not to mention of Communists and fellow-travelers who had suddenly discovered, during the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact, the unique evils of British imperialism, against which no foe could be wholly wrong.) When the United States entered the war, Mann chose to enlist as a private in the U.S. Army, which was not as easy as one might imagine. The FBI's background check supposedly revealed him to be "a communist pervert." Not until 1943, when American forces were running short of manpower, was he allowed to serve, first as an ordinary soldier and then as a correspondent in the European theater for *Stars and Stripes*.

While all of this was happening, Mann never ceased to write. His most famous book, *Mephisto* (1936), published by the polyglot publisher Querido in the Netherlands, is a devastating portrait of an actor who, formerly left-wing, comes to terms with the Nazis and becomes a favorite of the Prussian prime minister (never actually named in the book but obviously Hermann Göring). This novel, a *roman à clef* based on the real-life experiences of Gustav Gründgens,

Mann's former brother-in-law, never appeared in West Germany during Mann's lifetime, though it is today one of the period's classics, brought to the screen in 1981 by the Hungarian director Istvan Szabo, with the German actor Klaus Maria Brandauer in the title role.



Klaus Mann (1935)

This was followed by a huge portmanteau novel on the tragedy of German exile, *Der Vulkan*, which also appeared in Amsterdam just before the German invasion in 1940 and disappeared for years thereafter. By this time, of course, Mann was living in the United States. In 1942, just as he was going into the Army, an American publisher brought out his second volume of autobiography, *The Turning Point*. The characters of *Der Vulkan*, driven to unfriendly or inhospitable countries, constantly speculate on what kind of Germany there will be when Hitler is gone. But once the Third Reich actually collapsed, Mann had to come to terms with the fact

that the country could not simply pick up where it had left off in 1932.

This part of *Cursed Legacy* is particularly useful in understanding the ambivalence which many sensitive and liberal Germans, whether in exile or not, felt towards the division of the country in 1945 and the coming of the Cold War. I find Spotts's description of "anti-Communist hysteria" a bit overwrought, insofar as the years 1945-48 are concerned. But the division of the country into eastern and western sectors, against the background of increasing super-power tensions, inevitably led the occupying authorities to cast a blind eye on the political antecedents of the people with whom they had to deal.

As long before as the Saar plebiscite (1935), Klaus Mann had concluded that Hitler enjoyed genuine popularity in Germany, something which many other exiles—caught up in Marxist theories of fascism and "big business"—were loath to admit. In the immediate postwar period, if one began from the assumption that most Germans were sincere followers of Hitler, many to the very end, there were obvious practical limits to denazification. "The Germany of 1945," writes Spotts, "was not a Germany he knew or wanted to know." But efforts to establish himself elsewhere in Europe, particularly in Italy, where he attempted a collaboration with the director Roberto Rossellini, came to nothing. The 1948 Communist coup in Czechoslovakia hit him especially hard, as did the probable suicide of Czech foreign minister Jan Masaryk.

Without a publisher, or even a language in which he could write for a public ready to read him, Klaus Mann retired to the French watering hole of Sanary-sur-Mer near Marseilles, where he died in 1949 from a drug overdose. At age 43, he had already lived several lifetimes. ♦

Loss Leader

The prelude to the fall of France—in North America.

BY PATRICK J. WALSH

As a schoolboy, I remember leafing through the pictures of a history text and being captivated by an engraving of General Edward Braddock and his army marching in file along a newly cut path through the American wilderness. Behind every tree and rock crouched Indians and French troops waiting to annihilate his army.

What we call the French and Indian War is known in Europe as the Seven Years' War (1754-63). Winston Churchill referred to it as the "first world war" because it was fought throughout Europe and extended to North and South America and to both Indies. It started when the lieutenant governor of Virginia, Robert Dinwiddie, sent a 21-year-old militia major named George Washington with a message for the French to clear out of the disputed Ohio Valley. "The Ohio Valley," says David Preston, "represented the confluence not only of three rivers but of three peoples—Indian, French Canadian, and British." But Washington was pulled into a skirmish which sparked the larger war: "I heard the bullets whistle," he wrote, "and believe me there is something charming in the sound." Upon reading this, King George II quipped: "He would not say so if he had been used to hear many."

The French sought to secure the Ohio territory by erecting Fort

Patrick J. Walsh is a writer in Quincy, Massachusetts.

Braddock's Defeat

The Battle of the Monongahela and the Road to Revolution
by David Preston
Oxford, 480 pp., \$29.95



The death of General Braddock at the Battle of the Monongahela (1755)

Duquesne at the convergence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. Britain responded by appointing General Braddock commander in chief of all British and colonial forces, with orders to take Fort Duquesne and drive the French from the Ohio Valley. Parliament expected the colonies to contribute to a common fund and work together in defeating the French and Indians.

Arriving in Virginia in February 1755, Braddock soon found out the sad state of disorder in the American colonies. Food and stores, horses and wagons had been ordered months before Braddock's arrival, but little was ready when he appeared, and it looked as if the expedition was at an end. But Braddock was able, resourceful, and good on the ground. The expedition was saved by the intervention of Benjamin Franklin, the great exemplar of the American genius for settling problems of immediate necessity: He procured 150 wagons and 1,500 horses as supplies, enabling the campaign to proceed. Braddock declared Franklin "almost the first Instance of Integrity, Address and Ability, that I have seen in all these Provinces."

General Braddock sought to conquer the French the old Roman way, by building a road across the wilderness, over the Alleghenies and into western Pennsylvania. Certainly, he had to do so in order to transport the heavy cannon necessary for besieging the French fort. Three hundred axe men preceded his army, hacking and hewing a road for 1,500 soldiers including militia from New York, Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas. Among them was Washington, who served as an aide to Braddock.

In *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884), Francis Parkman described the road this way:

[it] was but twelve feet wide, and the line of march often extended four miles. It was like a thin, long party-colored snake, red, blue, and brown trailing slowly through the depth of leaves, creeping round inaccessible heights, crawling over ridges, moving always in dampness and shadow, by rivulets and waterfalls, crags and chasms, gorges and shaggy steeps.

It was a good day when the army traveled 10 miles on their grueling journey of over 115 miles—an enormous drudgery through heat, humidity, drenching rain, and every manner

of biting and blood-sucking insects. In a country where rapid, stealthy movement brought success, George Washington bristled at halting, “to level every mole hill and to erect bridges over every brook.”

David Preston’s excellent new book presents a fresh look at Edward Braddock, challenging “the conventional notion that [his] arrogance or blunders were chiefly responsible for . . . [this] defeat. This has depreciated the victory that Indian and French forces won by their superior discipline, tactical decisions and leadership.”

The Battle of Monongahela was essentially a race to see which side would get to Fort Duquesne first. The French rushed (successfully) to get reinforcements to the fort while Braddock sought to take it before this could occur. Braddock also anticipated a siege. But on July 9, 1755, the reinforced French left the fort to attack Braddock. His convoy marched in columns through an old forest; instead of breaking the column and letting the men take cover behind trees, as Washington and the colonial troops urged, Braddock tried to keep his men in the discipline of columns. Were it not for Washington and others, Braddock’s army would have been destroyed. But Washington fondly remembered Edward Braddock: His sash, along with a pair of pistols the dying general gave him, are still on display at Mount Vernon. Washington always believed that Braddock was “too severely treated. He was one of the honestest and best men of the British officers with whom I was acquainted.”

Napoleon used to ask before appointing a general, “Is he lucky?” Edward Braddock was not lucky. Yet Braddock’s victory, writes Preston, was “the military road that he had constructed across the mountains, which was instrumental in securing future British control over the region.” In 1758, Fort Duquesne fell to the British, and France went on to lose all its possessions in North America. The fort was renamed Fort Pitt for the victorious British prime minister, William Pitt; over the site now stands downtown Pittsburgh. ♦

B&A

Awake and Read!

Who can explain the appeal of Clifford Odets?

BY JONATHAN LEAF

W as there ever a successful Marxist author whose parents weren’t affluent? From Bertolt Brecht to Frantz Fanon to Che Guevara, there’s a pattern: privileged youth, largely unmerited prominence, then increasing indifference from readers and audiences after death. As the falseness of the writing becomes clear, the shining light of fame moves on. But one figure is at once a strange proof and a wholesale rejoinder to the rule: Clifford Odets (1906-1963). The exception is striking.

This is not to say that Odets was born into the hardscrabble world he depicted in his plays. In fact, his father owned a thriving advertising agency. Moreover, as Odets himself said, “I have never been near a strike in my life.” What distinguishes Clifford Odets from the Erich Fromms and Amiri Barakas of the world is not that he understood the life of the proletariat. The difference is that his work is not fading from view.

There have been four Broadway productions of his plays in the last decade. That’s almost half the number Shakespeare has had, and more than Eugene O’Neill or Arthur Miller. It’s as many as George Bernard Shaw and Anton Chekhov *combined*. And these productions featured name actors such as Morgan Freeman and Mark Ruffalo, and their glowing notices were followed by 19 Tony nominations. Indeed, according to the *New Yorker*, the shows placed Odets “finally and forever in the Pantheon, where he belongs.” Yet another full-length biography is about to be published.

Jonathan Leaf is a playwright who lives in New York.

Along with this renewal of interest in Odets comes an accepted narrative: Clifford Odets was among America’s most gifted playwrights, but his genius was destroyed by the false money and wasted years he spent in Hollywood.

This tale is one which the playwright himself subscribed to: Looking back on his life, Odets remarked humbly, “I do not believe that a dozen playwrights in history had my natural endowment.”

But there is a problem with this account: While Odets had a very real talent for creating vivid characters and distinctive, lively dialogue, his plots are of two types: idiotic and preposterous, and outrageous and objectionable.

By most accounts, his three most important plays are *Awake and Sing!* (1935), *Golden Boy* (1937), and *The Big Knife* (1949). Consider their stories. *The Big Knife* concerns a Hollywood movie star named Charlie Castle. When a depraved studio head and his flunky arrange for the murder of a key witness to an accidental vehicular homicide Castle was responsible for, Castle is forced to sign a huge new contract. Yet, learning of their machinations against his adulterous wife, Castle kills himself in shame.

Golden Boy is about a young Italian American, Joe Bonaparte, who has to choose between a bright future as a classical violinist and his status as a middleweight contender. Joe is conflicted by the knowledge that boxing will ruin his delicate fingers and make his father’s dream of his playing Paganini impossible; but for too long, Joe is putty in the hands of manipulative beauty Lorna Moon and his crooked fight managers. Yet when Joe knocks a highly ranked opponent dead in the ring, he is filled with remorse and

drives away wildly, ending his own life and Lorna's in a desperate and purposeful car accident.

Do such people actually exist? Would George Clooney or Jennifer Lopez decide to end their lives because they had no choice, for years to come, but to star in big movies for high salaries? Was there ever a homicidal/suicidal violin prodigy equally known for his right hook and left jab?

Awake and Sing!, regarded by many as Odets's best play, is also contrived. But its plot is plausible. The story centers on a working-class Bronx clan who must take in a boarder to make ends meet. The family's grandfather, Jake, is a committed Marxist and jobless barber. But while Jake is a voice of wisdom, his arrogant and thieving children ignore his preaching and plot against his grandchildren, Ralph and Hennie.

In the play's bald presentation, the only hope for a better, nobler world stands with these two young people—and the Soviet Union. Indeed, at the end of *Awake and Sing!*, Ralph reads his grandfather's Marxist tomes and his eyes are opened to the wonders of communism and, by implication, Joseph Stalin. The play is set in 1934, which means that the hero is learning about the Soviet Union just a year after five million Ukrainians were forcibly starved to death and as the Moscow purges are taking place.

But that's not all that is offensive or absurd about the conclusion of *Awake and Sing!* Equally incredible is the transformation of the boarder, a one-legged gangster, from misogynist and sexist brute to tender-hearted romantic. We are asked to believe that, as he is transformed by love, he will be an ideal lover and husband—and he and Hennie will live happily together in (pre-Castro) Cuba once she has sensibly abandoned her 1-year-old child. Odets's presentation of his characters proves as willfully naïve and sentimental as his politics.

Ironically, Odets's work as a hired Hollywood scriptwriter has stood up well. This is especially true of *Sweet Smell of Success* (1958), a classic about the seedy world of publicists and gossip columnists in New York City.

Here, Odets merely adapted someone else's true-to-life screenplay draft. The story, by Ernest Lehman, was based on his experiences with columnist Walter Winchell; since Odets's skill at writing dialogue and crafting characters was considerable, the results were sterling.

The defects of Odets's plays, however, are plain: He had limited imagination, and his only ideas were either pulp fiction or political dogma he picked up from leftist friends. Given this, would it be too much for theatrical producers to give theatergoers a merciful break? ♦

BCA

It's a Battlefield

A serious comedy turns to the lure of war.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

It is well that war is so terrible," Robert E. Lee once said, "or we should grow too fond of it." The quote makes almost no sense to us today, after a century of battlefield horrors and the awareness of the psychic and spiritual costs of war on those who fight it. But for soldiers in the premodern era, going off to battle often meant something entirely different: a thrilling escape from the daily drudgery of a hardscrabble existence, subsistence farming, or horrendous factory work in pursuit of a glorious ideal. Camaraderie and purpose were joined together with petty theft, looting, alcohol, and camp-following women. Hanging over it all was the exhilaration of facing and daring death.

The risk was enormous, but so was the psychic and personal reward from transcending the difficulties of ordinary life, which was laced with dangers of its own in any case.

Lee's words would today mean the most, I think, to journalists who make their careers traveling to, and living in, war zones. I've never been one, and never been in the military, but I've known them and worked with them throughout my career. They don't have to do it. No one makes them do it. They can do something else—anything else. They often wreak havoc on their quo-

Whiskey Tango Foxtrot

Directed by Glenn Ficarra and John Requa



tidian lives by doing so, leaving angry ex-wives and yearning children in their wake. Their bravery and gall are the wonder of all who know them, and that glory explains some of their dedication, as does their determination to tell the stories of the countries they travel to and the soldiers who are fighting. But they do it because they love it. War is terrible, and they have grown fond of it.

The sharp-witted and surprisingly low-key *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot* is a full-blooded character portrait of one such present-day foreign correspondent—an unlikely one, which makes this a classic fish-out-of-water-and-into-the-dust-of-Kabul story. Tina Fey is the star and producer of *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot*, which was written by her *30 Rock* collaborator Robert Carlock. And it's almost deliberately cast in the form of a *30 Rock* take-off in which Fey's Liz Lemon character from that long-running sitcom is forced to move to Kabul and become a war correspondent. Kim Baker lives the same single-woman New York City media life as Liz and has a boyfriend as unsatisfying as many of Liz's boyfriends.

Fey's Kim is an instantly recognizable seriocomic type, which makes it all the more jarring when she is thrust into

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, is THE WEEKLY STANDARD's movie critic.



'What it's like to have a front-row seat in a true life-and-death drama'

an unrecognizable reality. And the reality, it turns out, is *fun*. After decades of a cramped, parched life in Manhattan—her moment of crisis comes when she realizes she has been working out on the same piece of exercise equipment every night for years and can recognize the stains on the floor in front of it—Kim is soon transformed into a hard-drinking, late-night-partying, cursing-in-Pashtun tough guy.

Her life becomes more vivid and more exciting, complete with a quite reprobate Scottish photographer boyfriend played by the chameleon-like master Martin Freeman. We see her make a momentary return to her Manhattan apartment, which again could be Liz Lemon's—the plants are dead, a clear sign her home is now Kabul.

The new Kim instinctively runs toward trouble rather than away from it, so much so that her wise formerly-a-doctor local guide (a wonderful performance by Christopher Abbott) warns

Tina Fey's character is an instantly recognizable seriocomic type, which makes it all the more jarring when she is thrust into an unrecognizable reality. And the reality, it turns out, is fun.

her: The addiction to the kick of war-zone life has eerie parallels to a junkie's need for an ever-more-powerful fix.

Based on *The Taliban Shuffle*, the 2011 memoir of the newspaperwoman Kim Barker, *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot* is completely respectful of, even somewhat awed by, the courage and sacrifice of the

American military personnel Kim covers. She develops a jocular, jousting, and mutually admiring relationship with a no-nonsense general (a delightful Billy Bob Thornton) whose sense of humor is as dry as an Algonquin martini. The only villains of the piece are the Taliban and the news executives in New York who have grown bored of Afghanistan and won't run her stories.

Whiskey Tango Foxtrot is not a jangly action thriller, like *The Hurt Locker*, or a heartbreaking portrait of a society at risk, like *The Kite Runner*. It's a more intimate thing. It's a story of what it's like to have a front-row seat in a true life-and-death drama in which you might be called to act at any moment, and the unparalleled transformative power of that experience. The question this smart, unpretentious picture asks is: Will Kim and her friends grow so fond of war that they will cease to recognize how terrible it is until it kills them? ♦

“‘There is no violence. There’s lovefests,’ Trump said of his rallies. ‘These are lovefests.’”

—Politico, March 14, 2016

PARODY

**The man who
brought you
TRUMP VODKA &
TRUMP UNIVERSITY
is proud to present...**



trumpstock



Come join me, Donald Trump, for a tremendous lovefest this weekend. I tell you, we are all going to be loving each other so much, it’s going to be tremendous, really. I mean, there will be so much love you won’t even believe it. It’s going to be like Woodstock—but times a thousand, in terms of love. And not full of losers. There will be love everywhere, and you’re free to love in whatever way you want: yelling, punching, shouting, pushing, ethnic slurs—whatever! Featuring:

- A spoken-word poem by Corey Lewandowski: “Dr. Strangle-love, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Media”
- Trumple-Mania: Trump endorsers Hulk Hogan and Jesse Ventura face off in steel cage match of love!
- A special love seminar by Donald Trump: “How to Keep Your Wife and Mistress Happy at the Same Time!”

And just like love, it’s all free!*

* Free entry to the parking facility only. Actual cost to enter Trumpstock is \$14,000. Financing available through Trump Payday Loans.

**3 DAYS
of LOVE
& TRUMP**

the weekly
Standard

MARCH 28 / APRIL 4, 2016